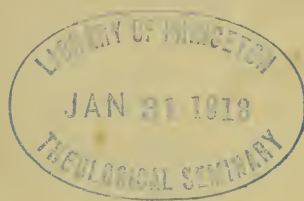




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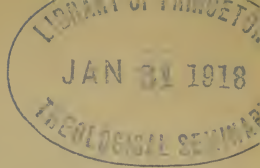
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William

BURNSIDE COTTAGE,
24 BURNING ROAD,

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LETTERS
ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE
VISIBLE
CHURCH OF CHRIST,

ADDRESSED TO

JOHN ANGEL JAMES,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN BIRMINGHAM,

BY

✓
R. M. BEVERLEY.

“Speak unto the Children of Israel that they go forward.”—EXOD. XIV. 15.

LONDON:

JAMES DINNIS, 62, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1836.

J. UNWIN,
ST. PETER'S ALLEY, CORNHILL,
LONDON.

PREFACE.

IT does not appear to me that any of these letters, except the 22nd, require a preface or explanation. In that letter I have freely commented on the conduct of the Wesleyan missionaries, in promoting the violent counsels connected with the late Caffre war: and on that subject an introductory remark seems requisite; for so great are the prejudices entertained by many persons against the Christian missions, that it is not impossible my animadversions on the Wesleyan missionaries might be caught at by the enemy, as conclusive evidence against the benefit of missions altogether, furnished by one who professes to be their advocate. To prevent such an erroneous conclusion let me state,

1st. That in the 22nd letter, I speak only of those missionaries whose acts have been made public by the Parliamentary papers*. 2nd. That I do not include in my observations any missionaries but those who are named in the Parliamentary papers. 3rd. That Mr. Shaw, the predecessor of Mr. Shrewsbury, who, according to the Methodist Magazine, is to resume his station in the South African mission, is understood to be a person of humane, liberal, and enlarged views; and superior, I trust, to the polluting† influence of the Colonial

* My conclusions are drawn exclusively from the documents published by order of Parliament. These documents are before the public, and to them I refer for proofs of my positions.

† The effects of this influence may be remarkably illustrated from Mr. Pringle's African Sketches. In describing our iniquitous massacre of the Ficani tribe, in the year 1828, he brings forward the sentiment of one of the Boors on that subject; "but what had your Ficani done," said the Boor, "when they were destroyed by wholesale slaughter, by your British commander? A regular army is sent by the government, hundreds of miles into unknown parts, on purpose to destroy a whole tribe of people, of whom we never so much as heard of before; who never did us the slightest injury; who against our arms were utterly defenceless,—and this act committed within the last few years,

government. His name and sentiments are quoted with approbation in that most interesting and useful book, "African Sketches, by Thomas Pringle;" and this appears to me a satisfactory proof that he is not, or at least that he was not, of the oppressing party.

too, when we hear of nothing but humanity, religion, and new laws for protecting the slaves and native tribes! Here we had massacres in all its horrors—shooting of men in cold blood,—the murder and mutilation of helpless females and children, and other atrocities too horrible to describe, but all this *your English missionaries defend or wink at, because it was done by Englishmen in authority, and does not tell against us the unfortunate Boors.*" pp. 369.) Mr. Pringle explains this allusion of the Boor, in the following note; "this refers, I believe, to a letter by Mr. B—, a Wesleyan missionary, inserted in the South African Advertiser, 'for March 13, 1833, defending the justice and expediency of destroying the Ficani."

The Boor had clearness of vision enough to unravel the mystery; "BECAUSE IT WAS DONE BY ENGLISHMEN IN AUTHORITY," is a concentrated expression of all that need be said on the subject.

A detailed account of the massacre of the Ficani will be found in Mr. Kay's book, pp. 328—332. It is, indeed, a dreadful story; Mr. Kay says, "A respectable British officer, whom duty required to be on the spot, candidly declared to me, that it was one of the most disgraceful and cold-blooded acts to which the English soldier had ever been rendered accessory."

Mr. Kay, a Wesleyan missionary, the author of a valuable volume on Caffraria, (*Travels and Researches, in Caffraria, by Stephen Kay, 1833*), has manfully shewn himself the friend of the natives, and has not only deprecated the use of those calumnies and malignant falsehoods against the Aborigines, which are in vogue amongst the courtiers of the Cape, but has, in the strongest language, condemned our wars of rapine and cruelty, and has described, with a masterly hand, some of those iniquitous acts by which the colonists were manifestly provoking the late war. That war has broken out since the publication of Mr. Kay's volume, and now we require other historians to record the merciless deeds of that cruel invasion.

My object, then, has not been to disparage the missions, but to shew that this particular mission, in a very critical period of its history, and precisely at that time when Christian principle was put to the test, failed in its duty, and did that, which,

if it be not undone, will produce consequences greatly to be deplored in the Christian churches. The duty of a missionary, as a preacher of the Gospel, is to be obedient to the government ; but it is one thing to be obedient, and another to be a tool of the government ; it is one thing to be quiet, and to pray in secret for better days and better men, and another to play the sedulous courtier, and, by private memorials, or public addresses, augment the fumes of viceregal incense. This is not passive, but *active* obedience ; it is not patiently enduring Nero's yoke, as the Apostles did, but increasing its weight—a distinction which the clerical body are too apt to forget.

The history of our proconsuls, and of all the oppressions that they have done under the sun, is now no secret: and if we would rival Rome in her greatness, we may also rival her in a Verres : but, in this deplorable chapter of our history, it ought not to have been recorded that the missionaries of any

sect were more than passive spectators ; nor should we be able to tell another generation that, when an evil Despot, (it matters not in what province, or in what century) was retiring from his Satrapy, not without apprehension of retributive justice at home, a certain sect, in *a missionary meeting*, clandestinely inserted a vote of thanks to the departing Satrap, for “his able, just, and righteous government,” and, by a trick (which failed), endeavoured to make this foisted vote appear amongst the resolutions of a missionary meeting !

To point out the scandal created by this sort of political intrigue has been the object of my animadversions ; and, if my remarks shall be in any way instrumental in curbing the rampant spirit of servility, which, however, disguised with the “conservative” paint of religion or loyalty, is still the spirit of tyranny, I shall not be without a reward ; though, for particular reasons, the task which I have prescribed to myself has been far from agreeable.

The following statement, copied from the Newspapers of November, may be viewed in pleasing contrast with the melancholy facts adverted to in this preface :—“ The King of the Haabi Islands, in the South Seas, who is a Methodist local preacher, yielding to the representations of one of the Methodist Missionaries, has emancipated all his slaves.” May these Missionaries be continually engaged in erecting similar trophies of Christian victory ! a victory beyond the reach of Heathen morality ; for, if Plato,* the high-priest of Ethnic virtue, is thought to have discovered no ordinary truth when he remarked, that genuine humanity and real probity are brought to test by the behaviour of a man to his slaves, whom he may wrong with impunity ; how much greater is the ethical superiority of the Gospel, which, by many principles converging to one point, compels the disciples of the Righteous Teacher to pronounce anathema on the very existence of slavery !

* Plato de Legibus, vi., Ed. Bipont, viii. 303.

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L E T T E R S,

&c.

LETTER I.

AN inquiry into the present state of the Church of Christ, must evidently be directed with a view to ascertain whether Christianity is advancing or receding: for the Church of Christ is of such a nature that, if it remains stationary, and is not constantly in progress, and constantly enlarging the boundaries of its dominion, it must be considered in a state of feebleness and decline. In this respect it is totally unlike any institution or invention of men; for, if a kingdom or republic is in possession of an ancient territory, and is furnished with wholesome laws securing equal justice to the population, and not impeding the operations of trade and commerce, it would, in these days, be considered prosperous and thriving; and any plan of aggressive conquest, merely to gain a wider domain, would not only be deemed unwise and imprudent, but highly injurious to the stability of the state.

An addition of territory to a kingdom already large is now justly considered dangerous policy, and the experience of history seems to prove that aggressive

warfare, undertaken to remove the ancient landmarks of nations, though splendid in design, is ruinous in the execution. The English empire established in Hindostan, the vast extent of the Russian tyranny, and the wide limits of the North American Republic—limits which cupidity and ambition are constantly carrying forward—will, in the final catastrophe of this unjust system, convey lessons of moderation to other states not to be forgotten. The lesson has, indeed, been ever thundering in the ears of mankind from the fall of Sardanapalus down to the imprisonment of Napoleon—and, like thunderstorms, has been disregarded; but men are, at last, listening to reason, and are beginning to acknowledge that national moderation is the only wise, as it is the only honest, policy.

It is not so, however, with Christianity: the kingdom of the Prince of the Kings of the Earth must increase; it cannot be cooped up in any ancient limits; if it possessed all Europe with perfect sway, and there was to abide without making a farther advance, it would be in a state of miserable decrepitude. The inheritance of Christ is far beyond the pillars of Hercules and the Hellespont; it extends to the aggregate of all heathen nations—"to the uttermost parts of the earth;" it claims every kingdom under heaven—"all people, nations, and languages are" its covenanted subjects—"all the ends of the earth shall fear him"—"every nation that God has made shall worship him"—"all kings shall fall down before him"—"he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

If, therefore, Christianity is at rest on the earth, we may not suppose that this rest is permanent: there is not an end to the work of the new creation, but a pause in the labours of the workman, the progress of which cannot be arrested till the whole plan shall be harmoniously perfected. The building must go on till

the top stone be brought in with shoutings of "grace, grace" unto it. Geologists assure us, that there had been many and long pauses in the orderly completion of our globe, but the work never ceased till it was finished; nor did the morning stars sing for joy till the Creator pronounced that his work was very good. We are living in moral confusion, and in the midst of many changes; but the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; and this universal King shall rule in righteousness at last: and God shall pronounce that the moral as well as the physical world is "very good."

We know from ecclesiastical history that the progress of Christianity was soon arrested, though the success of its first efforts was almost miraculous. The mystery of iniquity had already begun to work in the days of the apostles; offences had come according to the warning, for it was impossible that offences should not come; and they went on increasing till visible and established Christianity became one of the direst visitations that ever afflicted the earth. The true church was driven into secret places. The Lord's people were few, and could be found with difficulty, whilst the worshippers of the beast were not to be counted for number. At one time, it might have been thought that Satan had established his throne of sin on a foundation not to be shaken, so that when our Lord said "now is the Prince of this world judged," he seemed to have spoken the word without a due knowledge of the awful power of his antagonist.

But the Good Shepherd knew all his sheep, and, though they were a little flock, he was continually with them in the wilderness; nor could all the fury of the destroyer exterminate the hidden church. He heard the prayers and counted every drop of blood of his Elect—he listened to their voice crying to him day and night, though he bore long with them, and at

last drew forth the sword of the Spirit to take vengeance on Babylon. The Reformation brought in light into the world; and light is the ruin of those who thrive in darkness. The Sun of Righteousness appeared above the horizon, and though clouds may have covered his glorious orb, yet still the light that is now in the world is from that source. We are not now "walking in the light of our own fire, and in the sparks that we ourselves have kindled!"

Three centuries, however, have rolled on since the death of Luther; and now, in the nineteenth century, can we say, that "Christ is Lord of all?" Alas! though the midnight of superstition is broken up, what a woeful spectacle does the earth afford?—Popery or Atheism (and these blood-hounds always hunt for the souls of men in couples), in France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Belgium, Ireland, and many parts of Germany,—the Greek Church, and its foolish superstitions, and profound ignorance in the Russian empire,—Mahomedanism and idolatry in all the rest of the old world,—Popery in all South America, Popery in Canada, and Popery in parts of the United States: then in England a National Church, avowedly and notoriously a gentle modification of Popery, with a nation of nominal Christians wholly given to war, and upholding a vast standing army in time of peace,—in the United States of America, slavery retained, not only with toleration but with zeal, while the whole continent of Africa may be considered a nursery of slavery to supply the market of cruelty for the rest of the world.

The difficulties in the way of the kingdom of our Lord upon earth seem at the present time immense; and if we look upon them in any other light than that of faith and spiritual trust in the promises of God, utterly and hopelessly insurmountable. And because carnal men do not, in this light, examine the moral and

religious prospects of the world, they, therefore, entirely disbelieve the whole system of Christianity; for they, knowing what mighty things are promised and predicted in the Scriptures concerning the kingdom of Christ, and seeing how little in reality has hitherto been done to the furtherance of these predictions, and how vast is the power of every Antichristian principle established in the world, and how feeble and minute are the means opposed to the dominant evil by the church of Christ, do, without hesitation, conclude that the gospel and the prophecies are wild fables of oriental dreamers, and that all the hopes of a universal kingdom of righteousness are the frivolous expectations of visionary brains. Hence the carnal man considers the labours of missionaries the labours of madmen, and there is nothing that does to the enemies of Christ appear more foolish, more preposterous, more laughably impossible, than the idea of bringing in all nations into the obedience of the faith.

But the opinions of those who are strangers to the power of Christ as a living Head to the church, do not move us; for where there is no faith, and no spiritual illumination, it is impossible to understand the operations and the covenant of God the Redeemer. These *are*, however, understood by believers; who, because they know that Jehovah has always wrought with a high hand for his covenant, and has always shown his power most when his people are driven up in a corner to the brink of the Red Sea, with the waves before, and Pharaoh behind, are willing, in the greatest discouragement, to stand still and behold *his* salvation, which is as far above their means as heaven is above the earth. Now, though the discouragements are great, in these our days, they are far less than they once were; the sun is above our horizon, as I have already said, though the clouds have veiled up his glory; and the light which we now have, though dim

and obscure, is still such a light as we had not in the fifteenth century. He that has done so much for us, is a living God, and the light, by his command, will assuredly shine more and more unto the perfect day. The promises of the kingdom of Christ may be afar off; but we are persuaded of them, and we embrace them; and we dare not let them go, lest with them we should let go the gospel also.

It is, therefore, now our duty to inquire into the offences that are at present in the way, and to ascertain the means for removing them, that we may see what our prospect is for the coming time, and so be able to judge, by a careful inspection of appearances, in what respect we are nearer to the restitution of all things, than when that monster of iniquity Innocent III. sat on the throne of Christendom, shewing himself as God, and making himself drunk with the blood of the saints.

In managing this inquiry I do not intend to advert to the evil that prevails amongst mankind, except as it stands in connection with the operations of the church of Christ. I pass over the sins of heathen idolatry, and of the Mahomedan imposture, and propose only to examine those strong holds of iniquity with which the church of Christ comes into collision, not in her missionary efforts, but in her daily intercourse with the wicked world, in the intricacies of whose false wisdom I think her understanding is at present somewhat entangled; for as the church is the depository of the strength of Christ with mankind—as He has promised to be with her to the end of the world—as He has sent unto her another and an abiding Paraclete to comfort and to lead her constantly into all truth—as his victories are by the word of the gospel set forth by messengers whom He has appointed and blessed; and as it is his will to get unto himself great glory in the weakness and apparently unarmed nakedness of the armies which he commissions for his conquests

—it is to the church that we must turn our anxious attention, that we may discover what are her actual powers and privileges at this present time—what are the marks of her debility or decay; or what the signs of her reviving health, her returning energies, or her resuscitating vigour: and so be able to come to some sure conclusions concerning the approach of that universal empire of righteousness which our prayers are constantly invoking.

LETTER II.

THE priesthood of Christ constitutes the preeminence of the Christian Religion over all others ; and this is not only a preeminence, but a peculiarity ; for there is nothing like it in all the world besides. We know, by the gospel, that God was manifest in the flesh ; that he took upon himself the form of a servant, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross ; for which reason he has been highly exalted, and has received a name above all others, that every knee might bow to him, both in heaven and in earth : and that every tongue might confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

This exaltation is in his priesthood—an exaltation which is great by *comparison* ; for, whereas all antecedent priests and priesthoods were mortal, *He* lives for ever—He is an eternal high-priest—and as all the temples and churches of other priests are subject to decay, and never have lasted above a few centuries, his temple is in heaven itself ; He has a special sanctuary which time and war and revolutions can never injure : and as other priests could only bless the people that came to see them, in some fixed and certain place, and so could reach but a very few of the inhabitants of the earth, He is, on the contrary, a Sun of Righteousness—a blessing to all the world ; the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world ; He is the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is with his people to the end of the world. Hence the tribes of the

mystical Israel have a privilege unknown in every other religion, that the Great and Holy One of Israel, who took their nature upon him, and is now exalted on the throne of Omnipotence, is their Priest—their only Priest—“for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;” so that an assembly of worshipping Christians congregate to approach the throne of grace by the help of this priest, *and of none other*, and as the nature of the exalted Saviour is greater than the sinful nature of man, and as the heavens are more glorious than a building made of stone or brick, though decorated with gilding and painting; and as the splendour of Him, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, is greater than the magnificence of a prelate in his pontificals, so far is the spiritual worship of the church of Christ more noble, more beautiful, more divine, than the liturgy of those dreamers who sensualize their religion with the weak and beggarly elements of exploded types.

The prophecies are constantly directing the attention of Israel to this great High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek: he was to sit as a priest on his throne and bear all the glory: he was to sit at the right hand of God (the place of power) till all his enemies became his footstool. The wicked woeful world, with all its crimes, idolatries, and bloodshed, its craft, cruelty, and desolation, was one day to be turned into a garden of delights under the government of this royal priest. In short, the whole Scriptures are written to direct the attention of them that seek salvation, to this Holy One enthroned in glory, as the mediator of the whole world; and our Lord himself told us, that we ought to search the Scriptures, *because they testified of him*.

The first preaching of the gospel seemed to be

based on the solemn words of the dying Saviour, "IT IS FINISHED,"—words which were followed by the rending of the legal veil of the temple, and the perpetual condemnation of all Aaronical institutions for ever. The early Christians, I mean those of the first century, never for a moment supposed that there was any priest remaining in the true service and worship of God, excepting Him only who had "entered in once into the holy place, and so had obtained eternal redemption for them." They never thought that the preachers and teachers of the gospel were priests; that they were an evangelical tribe of Brahmins who had taken place of the Levites; that of these new priests some were "Lords" over others, some "Arch Lords," some "Most Reverend," some "Right Reverend," some "Very Reverend"; but all, from the greatest to the least, *Reverend*: they never imagined that the body of believers were to be divided into two classes, one called "the clergy," and the others "the laity;" that the clergy were to be worshipped and paid by the laity; were to be men of education and leisure; a caste of separated Reverends, dressed in sable garments, and feeding the inferior "laity" with grace and pardon. This, I say, is no where intimated in the New Testament; not a syllable can be extracted from the Scriptures to prove the doctrine of clergy and laity; for the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles know only of teachers and preachers elected by the people, whilst all the Christian people, men and women, are reputed, in Holy Writ, the elect fraternity, the royal priesthood, crowned and anointed under Christ their common head.

Tradition, however, supplies the deficiency, and has taught us that the church very soon fell into oblivion of its privileges, and returned with avidity to those things which had been destroyed. In the second century, the elected teachers began to utter strange propositions of the priestly functions of the Gospel

ministry, and in the third century the pontifical heresy had made rapid advances to maturity.*

I take it there were six causes of this dreadful change:—1st. The strifes and schisms in the early churches, which seemed in the perplexity they created to call for the convenient remedy of a strong government, and made it desirable, as a matter of mere policy, to place power in the hands of a body of men who might have a perpetual interest to suppress the popular and republican spirit. The bitter lamentations which Clement makes of the tumultuous state of the Corinthian church, and of the disrespect shewn by the Corinthians to their teachers, prove that the popular power was very soon felt to be an inconvenience, and that the leading teachers had an eye to the increase of the ministerial prerogatives.

2dly. The imperious and worldly spirit of some of the teachers who wished to exercise lordship over their flocks in proportion as their flocks seemed disposed to resist the introduction of such a lordship. If the epistles of Ignatius could be considered genuine, they might be quoted as an instance of the arrogant spirit of Popery, making its appearance even in the first century; but as no sound-minded critic could believe these epistles to be genuine, I must only notice them with a view to those episcopalians whose affections for the mitre cloud their judgment in an ecclesiastical question of this sort. For these persons, let it be granted that Ignatius is the author of the “larger epistles” which go under his name, and truly, on that supposition, it must be acknowledged, that Ignatius was one of the most haughty prelatists and violent church-autocrats that ever figured on the drama of usurped authority.

* The Council of Nice decreed that a bishop should be consecrated by all the bishops of the province; but if that were impossible, owing to local difficulties and inconveniences, three bishops at least should be present at the consecration; the metropolitan assenting; the Council of Nice was held, A.D. 325.

3dly. The effect of Pagan persecution, which, as it generally selected the gospel teachers as the first victims for the sword or the arena, did, on that account, invest their memories and characters with a peculiar sanctity. A presbyter of a church seemed, in those days, to be set forth before the others "appointed unto death." He lived the life of a martyr in anticipation; and was crowned before his victory by those who, in their friendly fears, saw him "die daily."

4thly. The speedy diminution of sound scriptural knowledge, which would alone be a door for all the wolves of Popery to make an entrance into the church. The conceits of heathen philosophy, learnedly mixed up with gospel institutes, the arts of rhetoric, and the abstractions of metaphysics, very soon found itching ears to receive them; angels came in abundance to preach "another gospel," and thus, as the word of grace was kept back, priestcraft rapidly advanced its standard from height to height of the gospel ground, till all fell under the power of Satan and his kingdom of darkness.

5thly. The tendency to *objectiveness* which is inherent in the human mind: in other words, a craving for some visible object for the senses to settle on. If the glory of Christ, in his priestly office, is duly exhibited, it can be contemplated by faith alone; for we can shew believers neither priest, sacrifice, altar, mercy seat, sweet swelling incense, nor temple of any sort. Hence our Lord pronounced a memorable blessing on those who should not be able to see, and yet should believe.. This invisible glory is great beyond description, for its clearness, beauty, and consolation to those who have been taught the faith by the spirit of truth; but to carnal minds it is an abstract intangible doctrine without one drachm of satisfaction or semblance of reality; it affords no sort of pleasure, comfort, or strength to the soul of a mere nominal christian, and is as little beloved by him as any of the dry

propositions of Euclid. But a visible priesthood, with power and parade, officiating within the perimeter of holy rails, at altars of gold or marble, and mimicking mediation with divers well contrived ceremonies and shows of intercession is gross food for the natural man, and such as his coarse palate does exceedingly relish.* The natural man has an appetite for quails — manna is disgusting to him—he is always lusting for flesh in the wilderness, and hence priestcraft is amiable to all mankind till its arts of rapacity and oppression render it an intolerable burthen. Nothing but the gospel, therefore, can save mankind from this all-devouring evil, which has as constant a tendency to return on society, as the sea to invade the banks of Holland; and to bring back its tribe of monsters over the golden harvests of a blessed agriculture. Our Lord is exalted in heaven to rescue mankind from priests: all that came before him were thieves and robbers, and every priest that has followed after him, is, by his office, an

* Bunyan, the immortal author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, has recorded his love for the outward show of worship, and his admiration of priestly authority, in the days of his darkness. "Then began I to fall in very eagerly with the religion of the times: to wit, to go to church twice a day, and there very devoutly both say and sing, as others; yet retaining my wicked life; but withal was so overrun with the spirit of superstition, that I adored, and that with great devotion, even all things (both the high-place, priest, clerk, vestment, service, and what else) belonging to the church: counting all things holy that were therein contained; and especially the priest and clerk most happy, and, without doubt, greatly blessed, because they were the servants, as I then thought, of God, and were principal in the holy temple, to do his work therein. This conceit grew so strong on me, that, had I but seen a priest (though never so sordid and debauched in his life) that I should find my spirit fall under him, and reverence him; yea, I thought, for the love I bore them, as the ministers of God, I could have laid down at their feet, and have been trampled upon by them; their name, their garb, and work did so intoxicate and bewitch me." What multitudes are there in the Church of England who have no other religion than this!

enemy of the truth, and a soldier of the great army of Antichrist.

6thly. A misstatement, or modification, and, at last, a positive denial of justification by faith alone without good works. On this fundamental doctrine there is a sad obscurity, contradiction, and uncertainty, in the school of the Fathers, and though they sometimes assert justification by faith, they sometimes virtually deny it. The system of meritorious works and of satisfactory penances is to be discerned in a nascent state in the writings of the early doctors; and this system is the strength of priestcraft: for, if good works may justify, and if acts of merit and penance can procure pardon, the vast market and trade of absolution and confession is thrown open for the deceived, and priests become then as necessary to those who enter into that market, as merchant-ships are for the merchants of foreign articles. Hence it will be found that priests naturally insist on justification by works*, and denounce the contrary doctrine with unrelenting anathemas. As it is the glory of the true and only Aaron to absolve him from iniquity who worketh not, but who believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, so is it the manifest interest of a false priest to absolve him who does work, and by the abundance of his good works satis-

* "That point of justification (of all others) is exceeding important; inasmuch as Calvin was faine to persuade, that if this one head might bee yeilded safe and intire, it would not quite the cost, to make any great quarrell for the rest." Bishop Hall's *No Peace with Rome*.

So also Luther, "wherefore if the Pope will grant unto us, that God alone, by his mere grace through Christ doth justify sinners, we will not only carry him in our hands, but will also kiss his feet: but since we cannot obtain this, we again, in God, are proud against him above measure, and will give no place, no, not one hair's breath, to all the angels in heaven; not to Peter, not to Paul, not a hundred emperors, nor to a thousand popes, nor to the whole world."

On Galatians.

fies his confessor as well as his own deluded conscience. The strength of the Antichrist is priestcraft,—the strength of the faith is to dispense with it altogether; justification by merit is inseparable from priestcraft, and, therefore, the strength of the Reformation was to restore the gospel, to preach Christ and his righteousness alone, to declare that we are justified by faith without works, and that we stand in need of no Saviour but of Him, who by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

To these it might be expected that I should add a 7th cause, the connexion of Church and State, by the politic arts of Constantine, and the spurious piety of his successors: but, indeed, the church was already so deeply corrupted when he mounted the throne of the world, that he did but consolidate the scattered elements of existing mischief. The church had, by that time, acquired so strong an *affinity* for the state (as the chemists say,) that it would have been impossible to have kept them apart much longer. When once, however, this concord of iniquity was duly achieved, the Levitical privileges of the usurping clergy became part and parcel of the laws of the empire. The mind of Christ was no longer to be found in the gospel, but in the imperial edicts; and the decrees of the monarch, or the councils of priests, summoned by imperial mandate, became the rule and standard of orthodoxy! This new order of things never ceased till it, at last, brought forth the disastrous serpent of the church,—the Pope, the man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposed and exalted himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple, shewing himself that he is God.

This hasty sketch of ecclesiastical corruptions will suffice to shew the origin and progress of the Popish doctrine, which may be summoned up in this single

definition, "teaching that man may take the priestly office of Christ." In what respect, I think we have not yet fully returned to the Gospel Institutes, by teaching *and by acting also as if we believe the doctrine*, that every faithful believer is a spiritual priest by virtue of his union with the Head of the church, I purpose to examine in the following letter.

LETTER III.

It may, perhaps, be enquired, *in limine*, what meaning is to be attached to the word "Priest?" for I am aware that there exists a small class of liberal-minded and evangelical clergymen, who, instructed in the true institutes, and, knowing full well that the sacerdotal heresy in the strength of the papal apostacy deny that they are priests in the popish sense.

A priest is a person consecrated for the priestly office, by an order of priests already existing, and supposed, in virtue of this consecration, to be endowed with a character, giving him privileges in divine things above those of his fellow-worshippers, who are not consecrated as he is.

In the Levitical institutions, we find the priest greatly exalted in the service of God above the people, because the Levitical order was, till the coming of Christ, a type of the company of the faithful under the High Priest, who was eminently a type of Christ himself: the whole of the worship, the burning of the offerings on the altar, the presenting of every zebach* and mincha, of every korban and olah in the temple, and the performance of every religious ceremony, were the exclusive privilege and duty of "the priests the sons of Aaron." The most important of the Levites' sa-

* *Zebach*, the slaughtered offering; *Mincha*, the meat-offering of inanimate things offered by fire. *Korban*, an offering generally; *Olah*, a burnt offering.

cerdotal functions was to make an atonement for the sins of those that came to him, to have their sins removed through his mediation. "And it shall be, when a man shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing, and shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord for his sin which he hath sinned, a lamb or a kid for a sin-offering, and *the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin*" (Lev. v.) *and it shall be forgiven him.*" (Ib. iv.)

The sacerdotal powers of the popish clergy, though excessive, are avowed and notorious; for, in the theory of their religion, it is supposed to be impossible to continue in a salvable state, without the constant intervention and help of the priest. The priest makes an atonement for sin; he offers up the sacrifice of the mass for the living and the dead, and pronounces an absolution of sin on all those abused and foolish people who look to him as their necessary intercessor. Nothing can be done in all the round of the popish religious rites without the presence and blessing of the priest. Take away the mortal priest from popery, and all the system vanishes; and it is for this reason that popery is Anti-Christ, an opposition-Christ, another Christ, set up of man's invention, to abase the Lord our Righteousness, and on his throne to place a usurper-priest who is *not* "after the law of an endless life."

Now we know, as a matter of history, that the English clergy have emanated from the popish priesthood, and that the "apostolical succession," on which many of them rest the efficiency of their ministry, must, of necessity, be traced through eight centuries of popish bishops. They declare that they are reformed papists, cleared from the dross, but retaining the virgin gold of Rome. Hence, in an historical way, they inherit the priesthood of Rome, as, on theo-

logical reasons, they claim for themselves a full privilege of sacerdotal attributes. The first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury swore canonical obedience to the Pope at his consecration, and from him have come forth all the Protestant bishops.

The church of Rome is mother of the church of England, and this is so true, both in history and theology, that many of the Protestant prelatists have declared, and taken pains to prove, that the actual church of England is not a new system invented by Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth, but only rescued by them from some corruptions which encumbered it. "I dare conclude," says Bishop Hall, "and doubt not to maintain against all separatists in the world, that England (to go no higher) had in the days of King Henry the Eighth, a true visible church of God, and so, by consequent, their succeeding seed was by true baptism justly admitted into the bosom thereof, and, therefore, that even of them, without any further profession, God's church was truly constituted. But if it should be said that the following idolatry in Queen Mary's days, excluded them, consider how hard it will be to prove that God's covenant with any people is presently disannulled by the sins of the most, whether of weakness or ignorance, and that if they had renounced God, God had mutually renounced them."*

This history of the priestly succession is very important, for it not only explains the origin of the priestly usurpation, established by law in the national religion, but helps us to understand that uncertain and anomalous position which dissenting ministers do now occupy in the congregational societies. The history of the church of England is in no small degree the history of the dissenting churches also. The original quarrel of nonconformity was not on the subject of

* An Apology against Brownists.

church government: the first seceders protested against the pontifical vestments, and were driven into dissent mainly by the necessity imposed on them of wearing the popish surplice: they were so little awake to the all-important question of the priesthood that, for a long time, they agitated other subjects, and omitted this as scarcely worthy of their notice. They were, in the strict sense of the word, Calvinists,—that is, they looked to Geneva for their rule of conduct, and it is well known, that though Calvin had erected his platform of presbytery, he entertained high notions of priestly authority, and had no objection to call in the sword of the state to enforce the decrees of the church.

The unrelenting violence and cruelty of the English bishops did at last goad the persecuted nonconformists into an examination of the foundation on which their enemies stood; in their dungeons and chains they fully rejected prelacy as an Anti-Christian usurpation. From prelacy they moved on to presbyterian ideas; but, faithful to Calvin's pattern, they thought that the church and state ought to be united in a presbyterian love-knot. The presbyterian model is one of priests; the heresy is not got rid of in this second change, it remains,—the enemy is still at hand, though in a less alarming appearance; and as Milton most shrewdly said in one of his sonnets,—

“ Presbyter is but old priest,—*writ large.*”

The Brownists and Independents* next came forth, as reformers of a more thorough creed; but their ideas were still entangled amidst the ruins of old established opinions, and though they repressed much of the evil, by restoring the congregational scheme, which, as it

* I am aware that the Brownists soon appeared on the stage; but as they were for a long time but a small minority amongst non-conformists, their opinions cannot be said to have produced much effect till the Presbyterians had, as their predecessors, disturbed the political ideas of the nation.

isolates the pastor from the pastoral body, must of necessity restrain the sacerdotal powers, yet still they never seem to have agreed in boldly and plainly defining the Christian ministry, so as to prevent the possibility of a mistake amongst their successors. This was a grave error, and the effects of it are visible even now, for up to this present day there are no settled opinions,—no certain canon among the Congregational Dissenters, by which the limits of the ministerial authority can be stated, as the uniform rule of the whole body; and, indeed, the contradictory ideas entertained by Dissenters concerning the ministry, are so remarkable, that it is a matter of surprise to behold the actual harmony and fraternal feeling amongst the churches, in spite of the unsettled state of the question.

Thus have we traced the progress of the movement out of the papacy, through the Prelatist, the Presbyterian, and the Independent. The one sect has sprang out of the other in true lineal descent, so that the Independent can, with more than heraldic accuracy, confidently declare that the Pope is his great grandfather.

It is, however, but strict justice to remark, that another sect, if sect it can be called, has proclaimed the truth concerning the priesthood, and by entirely levelling every remnant of distinction between clergy and laity, has at last produced a system framed on the fundamental doctrine, that “the old covenant” having “decayed and waxed old,” ought “to vanish away.” This sect is the Quakers,—a body of men who seemed determined to investigate the perplexing question, without the least regard to the trammels of preconceived opinions and settled habits, and though, by such a method of investigation, they were in danger of running into some extravagancies, they were also sure to discover some truths unknown, denied, or

detested by their cotemporaries; for so great are the delusions of every generation, that he who systematically opposes the opinions of the age in which he lives, cannot fail to liberate some truths from the captivity of error, which nothing but a determined war of paradox could have rescued. The Quakers, then, are entitled to the whole credit of placing the sacerdotal controversy in its true light, and they not only stated the truth, but *acted* on it; and guarded their opinions with such a jealous discipline, that it became impossible for their successors in their society to misunderstand or misinterpret their meaning; to acknowledge a priest in any way, direct or indirect, is, in fact, to cease to be a Quaker. And herein is their wisdom deserving the highest possible eulogies; for though individuals amongst the Independents* have occasionally taught Quaker-doctrine concerning the priesthood, yet no society of Christians, excepting the Quakers, has, *as a society*, acknowledged and acted upon this great maxim, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the only Priest that has any preeminence, and that the whole body of believers are priests in perfect equality in and through their Head and Lord. One of the early Quakers was, therefore, right when he said, “we are not persons that have shot up out of the old root into another appearance, as one sect hath done out of another, till many are come up one after another, the ground still remaining out of which they all grow; but that very ground hath been shaking,

* I refer particularly to “The Book of the Priesthood; an argument in three parts, by Thomas Stratten, Sunderland;” a very valuable and eloquent volume, second to none that Dissenters have published this century. When the inevitable deductions from that excellent book shall have been acknowledged and acted upon, we shall behold “judges as at the first, and counsellors as at the beginning,” and then shall the Evangelical Zion be called “the faithful city.”

and is shaking,—destroyed, and is destroying,—removed and removing in us.”*

But it is not so with the Congregational Dissenters; the old ground has substantially remained, though much addition has been made of new soil introduced from various quarters; and with the old soil have also remained many of the fibres of the great root of Anti-Christ, which occasionally shew their life, “by springing up and troubling many:” it is to these fibres that I would now draw your attention.†

* Life of William Dewsbury. London, 1836, p. 5.

† It is curious to see the judgment of an acute Papist on the Protestant ministry. The following passage is from a work much praised by the Popish party:—“*Considerations sur le dogme generateur de la piété Catholique: par l’Abbé Ph. Gerbert. Paris, 1829.*”

“Wherever sacrifice ceases then the man remains and the priest disappears. Look at the Jews. Among no people of antiquity had the priesthood struck such deep roots,—nowhere was it surrounded with more respect. What are at present the Rabbis, who have superseded the Priests among that nation, disinherited of all sacrifice? The anathema which weighs on that degraded ministry is denounced to it even by Israelite lips, ‘their power,’ they exclaim, ‘can do nothing for the salvation of our souls.’ The same observation applies to Protestantism. The antique idea of the priesthood is one of the human ideas which it has lost with the sacrifice (i. e. *mass*). The day when the fire of the eternal holocaust was extinguished, the divine seal was effaced from the brow of the Protestant ministers. The public opinion of Protestants refuses them that pious respect which all nations have attached to the sacerdotal character; nor does it exact of them those superior notices which Catholicism imposes on the priest; and it does not exact them from a sentiment of justice, for it would be unfair to look for a consequence when the principle has been destroyed.”

There is much shrewdness in these remarks; but the Papist should learn from the Protestant, that the priesthood is *entirely abolished, and that no remnant of it remains in the Gospel*. This is the only true answer to Rome’s most subtle logic; as long as we keep up Bishop, Priest, and Deacon,—Presbyter, or an ordained learned ministry, we cannot answer these arguments. Whole priest or no priest is the alternative.

LETTER IV.

IN the definition of "a priest," I have already stated that such a one "is a person consecrated for the sacerdotal office, by an order of priests already existing." This is absolutely indispensable to constitute a priesthood, for if any one takes upon himself that office, without the intervention of the existing corporation, he is either a prophet or an imposter,—a priest ordained by God himself, for an especial purpose in the church, or one sent forth by an evil spirit, to prophecy lies unto the people. Every true member of the church of Christ, who has received the seal of the Spirit, is a priest in the gospel sense; and if, with that seal, he has received also the gift of teaching, and the church accept his gift, he is a prophet, and may deliver that knowledge which he has received. Paul declares he was an apostle, "not of men, neither by men,"—that is, he was no priest according to the received ideas and ancient custom; nobody had ordained him; no son of Aaron had annointed him with oil, and arrayed him in the consecrated ephod; the corporation of priests were not at all concerned or consulted in his ordination. If he had thought the apostolical succession indispensable in establishing the validity of his office, he might most easily have sought out those arch-bishops (as the apostles are deemed to be by some), and have received consecration from their hands; but he had other views, and what those views were he has stated very plainly,—

“When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred, not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia.” So he began preaching and teaching without ordination; and he so little thought it requisite to be ordained by the apostles, that he purposely avoided it, as is clearly intimated in the epistle to the Galatians.

This, then, is to be “an apostle not of men, neither by men,” and is the true apostolical succession, for the honour of which the church of Christ has good reason to be jealous; for if the societies of Christians had been careful to recognize those only as apostolical messengers, who had manifested their conversion by their self-denying zeal for their exalted sacerdotal King and Lord, we should not for fifteen centuries have been plagued with the plagues of Babylon, nor should we at this hour behold the afflicting spectacle of numerous Protestants entangled in the meshes of Rome’s pernicious cobweb.

To turn from the spiritual to the carnal priesthood, and to distinguish, by a broad line of demarcation, between “the clergy” and “laity,”—to act as if we supposed that a certain and visible order of men had the power of admitting candidates into their body corporate, or that their interference, or even assistance, were indispensable, in opening the door of the ministry to those whom the grace of God had previously selected to teach the truth, is in fact to take away from the glory of Him who sends the rod of his strength out of Zion, and who, by the donation of repentance and remission of sins, rules as a Prince in his Israel, and anoints all his elect servants to be kings and priests to God and his Father.

As the great labour of the son of perdition has

been to destroy the priesthood of grace, and exalt the priesthood of the flesh, and as this his work of wicked witchcraft has too successfully transformed the unity of the believing body into the cloven foot of "clergy and laity," so should it now be the unremitting labour of the servants of the Lord to undo his work,—to go back again to the fountain of original purity, and there, in a thorough cleansing of holiness, to recover the fair image of primeval simplicity, which may induce the bridegroom once more to say to his spouse, "thou art all fair my love, *there is no spot in thee.*" And for this purpose it behoves us not to tolerate any ancient custom, any received formulary of words, by which it is possible that the understanding of believers may be led unawares into a train of thought bordering on the old delusion. We have all an inherent tendency to that delusion; without this tendency the papacy never could have achieved that omnipotence of dominion which it formerly secured for itself; for what is the papacy, but an accommodation in all things to the desires of the natural man? and what is the anti-papacy, or Christ, but a crucifixion of the desires, and a confutation of the opinions, of the natural man? How careful, then, should we be to avoid the paths wherein it is even *possible* to lapse into old errors! How sedulous to follow the new spiritual chart in our journey through the wilderness! How cautious to shun the stumbling-blocks which are thickly set by Satan in every high-road and by-path of the journey! "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold *all things* become new!" His spiritual understanding is new, his religion is new, and he has a new God. With Jehovah, known in Jesus Christ, he comes to see the new privileges of the church, and to acknowledge that these privileges are altogether unlike any thing prevailing elsewhere—a spiritual temple, a spiritual altar,

a spiritual high priest, a spiritual society of priests and prophets, chosen by God the Holy Ghost, and by him appointed, anointed, and sent forth, according to his gifts, for any office he chooses,—a fraternity of spiritual kings, who shall reign with their God for ever,—and a spiritual union with the exalted Head of the church—perfect God and perfect man,—who is the brother and bridegroom of his church, and who has taught his servants this unspeakable mystery,—that they are part of his body, his flesh, and his bones.

Oh! who that acknowledges this creed, can, for one moment, return to the dismal trumpery of the clerical caste, without utter loathing and abomination? Who that understands these things can take up the name of priest or prelate in his mouth without nausea? But alas! we have been so long accustomed to see the sow that was washed return to her wallowing in the mire, that the disgusting spectacle excites neither our surprise nor our displeasure.

Now, in order to recover the privileges of which the church is lawful inheritor, through the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our duty is to place the gospel ministry in a clear light,—to bring it forth into open day, and not to allow it any false effect by shadowy back-grounds, and the picturesque accompaniments of antiquity. If the churches of Rome and England have *their* Brahminical orders; if they, in perfect consistency with their system, make their priests first breathe the sacerdotal life, through the indispensable handling of prelatical fingers,—if they have their upper and lower houses of Christians, the one called “clergy” and the other “laity,”—we cannot be at a loss for the line of conduct which we are to pursue, even to avoid all they have done, not only by ceasing to imitate or tolerate their deeds, but

by denouncing them as a delusion, and worse than a delusion.

At present, however, owing to carelessness and inattention, or perhaps to a tacit acquiescence in a custom which by some may be supposed to have its advantages, we see the congregational churches very generally tolerating the ceremony of imposition of hands,* in the ordination of their ministers; and so much is this ceremony respected in certain quarters, that I suppose its omission would not less give offence than the pretermission of the surplice by an officiating priest in one of our cathedrals. Some individuals admire the ceremony, because it is “an old custom,”—because ministers, whom they respect, take a prominent part in its performance,—and because it is generally accompanied with devout prayers, and edifying sermons. But still the ceremony either means something or nothing; if it means something, it must teach us, 1st. That the ministers have the power of conveying the Holy Spirit by the touch of their hands, which, without circumlocution, is plainly and broadly stated to be the case in the English Prayer Book;† or, 2nd. That the ministers are a corporate body, who, by this touch admit a candidate into their corporation; and 3rd. as a corollary from the 2nd. That they only can make a minister.

To admit the 2nd. without the 1st. is evidently unsound, for as the plea of imposition of hands is by

* By the First Book of Discipline, which was compiled by John Knox and his associates, and ratified by an act of council in 1560, the rite of ordination by the imposition of hands was laid aside as superstitious; but it was restored in the Second Book of Discipline in 1578, and is now practised as formerly in the Kirk of Scotland, where ordination is vested in the presbytery.

See “*Book of the Denominations*,” p. 334.

† See Letter vi.

the churches of Rome and Lambeth based on their supposed power of conveying the gift of the Holy Spirit, and as they support their pretensions by appealing to Scripture, and to Paul's ordination of Timothy, with its consequences,—a power which they say they have inherited from bishop to bishop, by the “apostolical succession,”—so to retain the ceremony, without a claim to the power, is a mere vanity—an imitation of a rite, without its essence—a mimicry of an antique custom, without its solemnity. To practise the imposition of hands in the recognition of ministers, without the accompanying pretences of Rome and Lambeth, is therefore to say that the ceremony means nothing; but if it means nothing, why make serious and devout exertions to execute a nullity? This is a question I have repeatedly asked, without obtaining a satisfactory answer; for all that I can learn is, “that it is a custom, and that the people are used to it.” True, the people *are* used to it, but they would not be so,—nay, they could not endure it,—if the evangelical priesthood were faithfully taught in the congregational churches, and if all its vast and precious consequences were constantly pointed out to believers, and acted upon as if they were a reality. It is my impression, grounded on careful and cautious observation, that much ignorance prevails in the minds of dissenters on this subject, the importance of which can hardly be too highly appreciated; for though the dissenting ministers must all be supposed to know the truth, yet this knowledge extends not to their congregations, or has so shadowy a substance in their minds as to produce no effect. The evil of “imposition of hands” is no trifle; for the *lay-dissenters* (grieved am I to be driven to such a phrase), who witness this ceremony, must attach great importance to it,—must suppose that the ministers convey some faculty of holiness, and are a corporation divinely chartered for

that purpose, or else must come to the conclusion that their pastors are acting a part in a scene which might be very conveniently omitted. And there is no question that the effect produced on the majority, by this ceremony, is a persuasion that the church of Christ is divided into "clerical" and "lay" members; and as it is now quite common for dissenting ministers to call themselves "clergymen," and to talk of "the laity;" the erroneous opinion is current, and every day is tending to increase and confirm the error, that a dissenting minister is merely "a clergyman" of the voluntary principle,—a parson of a church not established by law.

We are all expecting the day when the established church is to be dis-established; what would be the effect of such an event on the congregational churches, with their present ideas and practices relating to the gospel ministry? I can hardly doubt that it would speedily convert large multitudes of congregationalists into episcopalians, and simply because they have been so ill-instructed in the priesthood, and have been so long allowed to wander darkling on the subject, that they would hardly perceive the transition from a "reverend" congregationalist, to a "reverend" episcopalian, when once the barriers of acts of parliament and brute force had been removed. The change from dissent to the established church would not be so easy with some individuals even now, if they had received deeper and sounder lessons in one of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, and if they had not been all along misled by a foolish phraseology, and foolish customs, borrowed from the church of England, and by her inherited from Rome.

It is worthy of observation that the modern Independents have, in this respect, gone back from a more advanced position which they formerly occupied, and that they have allowed themselves to be drifted by

the current, in a retrograde direction, to a point from which they were at one time not a little anxious to escape. In other words, the modern Independents have a greater tendency to clericism than their predecessors. For proof of this fact, we may refer to Mr. Joshua Wilson's valuable "Historical Inquiry concerning the Principles, Opinions, and Usages, of the English Presbyterians," where he has shewn (page 203 — 222,) that the earlier and more rigid Independents took that view of ordination which is now professedly held by the modern English Presbyterians, alias *Unitarians*, and that the modern Independents agree, or nearly so, with the moderate Presbyterians of King William and Queen Anne's reigns. Now the English Presbyterians of that period were very decided in their views of ordination; they thought it indispensable, and laid a great stress on it. Among the "many things" which Baxter disliked in "the Independent way," one, and the first which he mentions, was, that "they made too light of ordination;" and in a treaty about an agreement with them, he tells us, "the greatest difference was the point of ordination." Dr. Calamy tells us, "that he did not pretend, while a *probationer*, to act with the attested authority of an ordained minister, and did not at that time baptize, as he knew he had no commission." This was the opinion of a Presbyterian. And Pierce, of Exeter, another Presbyterian, said, in his ordination sermon, that "he dared not act as minister without his ordination," for which assertion he was much praised by the clergy, "as a learned man," and as one very near their door.

Sentiments similar to these I have heard expressed in the most decided manner, by an eminent Independent minister; and though there are not many, according to my belief, who are of the Presbyterian doctrine on this head, yet it would be no difficult task

to select sentiments, from modern ordination sermons, which would better suit the Presbyterian than the Independent platform. And all this is to be traced to that which I have already noticed,—a want of caution on the part of the early Independents, who, by neglecting to state and define accurately their views of the ministry, its origin, limits, and functions, left the door open to sacerdotalism, which is sure to return, unless the door is hopelessly barred and bolted against it. The bitterness of the Clarendon* persecutions, and the peril in which dissenters were placed by the Jacobite scheme, in Queen Anne's days, brought the Presbyterians and Independents into close contact, and thus the Independents insensibly imitated and adopted the usages of their friends and brethren in affliction ; so that the modern congregational practice may, in fact, be considered the practice of those moderate Presbyterians, whom adversity had brought down from that high place of intolerance which their predecessors occupied.

The natural effect of ordination, by the "clerical" body, with the imposition of hands, is to create characters different from those who have not thus been ordained; it is, therefore, to be expected that such

* The famous Lord Clarendon was the restorer of the established church after its humiliation by the puritans; he not only replaced the bishops in the house of lords, and glutted the clergy with wealth and power; but endeavoured, with all his heart and soul, to exterminate the nonconformists, by repeated blows aimed at them through some of the most cruel statutes that ever hatred and revenge dictated. When this bad man fell from his high power, it was curious to behold the bench of bishops voting for the ruin of their benefactor and restorer; but a prelate is too much of a Persian in his creed not to worship the rising sun. The Honorable George Agar Elis, (Lord Dover,) did a service to society by publishing his "Inquiry into Lord Clarendon's Character." That little book has shown, in a manner not to be contradicted, that Lord Clarendon was as rapacious, dishonest, and thievish, as he was bigoted, vindictive, and unmerciful.

persons should carry the title of "reverend" about with them ever after; for as this is the finishing touch given to a priest in the chapels of the Vatican and Lambeth palace, it is in perfect keeping with the system that a clerically-ordained minister of the congregational churches should copy his protoplast in this respect, not only to assert the validity of his ordination, which the prelatists deny, but to collect thereby as much *reverence* as is due to a person who "is-to-be-revered."

It is true, indeed, that only a few ministers cherish this title as a valuable appendage, whilst the majority consider it unimportant, and some utterly despise it; but *still it is retained*, and therefore it is as open to criticism as any thing which we consider objectionable in the established church, but which the clergy declare is a matter of so little moment as to be out of the reach of criticism to all candid minds. As, however, right and wrong in the use of speech must be judged by the import of particular words, and as "every idle word" is strictly to be accounted for, it behoves us seriously to inquire why preachers of the gospel assume the title of reverend? Does the word mean any thing? If it means nothing, it is a solemn foolery—it is *an idle word*, and therefore should at once, and without hesitation, be renounced; but if it means something, what does it mean? The Scripture affords no authority for its usage, for there the word is only once mentioned, and in a manner to excite alarm in the mind of a pious minister.

"He sent redemption unto his people, HOLY AND REVEREND is his name."

And much as it may surprise those who have not examined the subject, there is no doubt that the title is an ascription of that reverence to a man which is due to God; a part of that impiety, which beginning with "reverence" for a priest, ventures to call an

Archbishop "Most Reverend," and a Pope "Holy."
We know that it came from the great mint of Rome;
and to Rome, therefore, ought we to send it back to
take its place with those indulgences, pardons, and
bulls which we long ago contemptuously carted out of
the kingdom.

LETTER V.

WHEN one person is exalted, it follows of necessity, that others must be depressed, and, as the exaltation of a minister is with reference to spiritual matters, it follows also that the depression of those around him is a spiritual depression. And thus it is in some dissenting churches at present. The people who constitute the church "look up to their pastor" with a spirit of obedience and expectancy, which, though, in particular cases, created by a defective system, may be advantageous, is, on the whole, injurious, inasmuch as it abases the privileges of the church, and is little favourable to the full growth of believers set before them in the gospel, "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," which should be the aim of all those who desire to be lively portions of the living temple.

I have said that a deficient system has created those cases in which the actual view of the ministerial office is advantageous; but I must refer you to the following letters for a full development of my meaning: taking matters, however, as we now find them, and granting it to be right, and according to Scripture, that one minister should rule alone in a church—that he should be considered a clergyman, and the members of the church the laity—that he should be a learned person, with no inconsiderable store of general information and critical knowledge—that he should be well-versed in the endless collisions and

contradictions of the exegetical and doctrinal commentators—that he should be a man of talent, whose exclusive duty it is to preach to and pray for a mute and expecting people, whose perpetual duty to him is to be silent, as it is his to be to them their constant teacher and liturgist,—then, of course, it must be right for the members of churches to follow and obey with all docility the ecclesiastical monarch of their society, to leave all spiritual concerns in his hands; and, in one word, to make him their priest, “to accomplish the service of God.” But if it should turn out that every one of these postulates is a fallacy, then the deduction will be inevitable, that the present relation of pastor and people to each other is unsound, and that it is either something more or something less than can be established by an appeal to Scripture.

It is one thing occasionally in a sermon to place the evangelical priesthood in a true light, and another to act as if we believed it to be true; for unless the practical consequences of the doctrine are allowed their full force in the churches, it is in vain to attempt a clear exposition of Paul’s epistle to the Hebrews. If a priesthood is still left upon earth with Aaronical prerogatives, then he who hath obtained a more excellent ministry reigns not without a rival; nor are the old things passed away; nor is he who sits on the throne allowed to make “all things new” without opposition from his creatures. Some particulars, in which the priestly office is either imitated or not avoided by ministers, have been already stated, and allowing largely that much good is done under the clerical government, both by the congregationalists and the established clergy, yet still *it is* the clerical government, and is the surrender of the privileges of the church into the hands of an individual. Sure I am, it was not so at first, for if the order of the primitive churches used to be that which now is, Paul never

could have used expressions such as these to the early Christians : “ if ALL prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all ; how is it then, brethren ? When ye come together, *every one of you* hath a psalm, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation : let all things be done unto edifying.” He wished to arrange their worship in a useful and comely order, and he gave his directions accordingly ; but it is impossible to elicit from his rules the most distant hint of a silent people listening to one fixed presbyter—the constant and only teacher and liturgist of the society.

But the tendency of the actual arrangement is, of necessity, to create inactivity amongst the people, when they feel that they have a spiritual delegate in whose hands are placed those large and responsible duties which are supposed to attach to the ministerial office. Many there are who can thus find a ready excuse for their own lack of zeal ; they think their pastor carries the keys of the church, and to him, therefore, they consign their spiritual energies, as if he were a general proxy for all the people in their works of faith and labours of love. What multitudes of church members might be numbered who take no personal interest in the operations of the church ! How many there are who content themselves with the external acts of worship and a formal attendance on ordinances, leaving all the rest to the minister, or to any one that chuses to undertake that which they will not touch with one of their little fingers. But with these notions there are other evils also ; for to this source may be traced frequent discontent amongst the members, and bitter sorrow to many a worthy and laborious pastor. Great and numerous are the duties expected of a minister, and large are the ideas entertained of the limits of his office ; and yet, if he does not fill up the

compliment of all the impossible toil imposed upon him, he too often falls into discredit with his people, for not doing that which cannot be done.

The study and preparation expected for the pulpit—the pastoral visits—the attention to the particular spiritual cases of individuals—the schools—the prayer-meetings—the church meetings—the public meetings, and all the rest of the complicated machinery of operative religion, impose a weight and multiplicity of cares on the shoulders of some pastors which none but Atlantean shoulders could sustain; and yet if the minister neglects any part of these enormous duties which a mistaken theory has apportioned to him, he is in jeopardy of forfeiting the esteem of some of his flock, as he too often discovers, to his no small discomfort and sorrow. To use a curious expression of a deep thinker, “he is a system and not a man;” circumstances have given him a character which rightly belongs to a society and not to an individual; but neither he nor the church understand the difficulty of the case, the hidden cause of the difficulty, or its only possible remedy. The theory of the parish-priest perplexes the views and confuses the judgments both of pastor and people, and as each party argues on an erroneous axiom, it is no wonder that the deduction of each should be faulty. The people, too, often think their pastor careless and inattentive; the pastor not unfrequently considers his people unjust and unreasonable.

LETTER VI.

I FEEL called upon by my subject not to omit a parallel view of the clergy of the established church, in their management of the sacerdotal functions.

It is not, however, necessary to dwell long on this head ; for the church of England is so manifestly and undeniably imbued with the sacerdotal heresy, that to animadvert on the pretensions of the Anglican clergy is, in fact, to animadvert on the popish priesthood. I do not at all desire in these letters to enter into controversy with the English church, except when the subject demands it. I am enquiring into the operations of *the church of Christ* as now seen on the earth ; and as many of the evangelical clergy, and many of their disciples have every claim to be ranked amongst pious christians, it would be a strange omission not to notice their opinions and practises in those points wherein they have afforded a pattern to the dissenters. Far be it from me, however, in this place, to turn aside from the evangelical church-people to the great herd of the godless, whether lay or clerical, who, by the vicious union of the church and state, are numbered in the established church. I have, in other publications, expressed my opinions on the vast and awful scandals of the church of England, and have, I trust, opened the eyes of thousands and tens of thousands to understand the merits of that question which now is a national controversy, and which, I am persuaded, will only be ter-

minated by the *secular* death of the dominant sect. But here I am concerned only with those who evangelically can be called christians—christians not according to the rubric and the statute book, but by scripture rule; and of such, in the church of England, and in spite of the church of England, it is cause of deep regret to behold their pious ministers occupying a position which they dare not and cannot defend by christian principles. The evangelical clergy are too well instructed in the institutes of the gospel, and understand too well the doctrine of the head of the church (alas! not the only head of *their* church,) not to comprehend the popish character and pretensions of the office they hold. They are priests—priests in the gospel sense of the canon law—priests by inheritance from the papacy—priests to the full contentment of all those dark-minded clergymen who have thrust their eyes into the blinders of the “apostolical succession.” This is so well understood by the better clergy that they feel it a very inconvenient truth, and one that they would fain be rid of, if they could. Some of them boldly plunge their memories into the waters of Lethe and declare that they are not priests—“only preachers of the gospel, and ministers of Christian congregations:” but, unfortunately, their creed on this subject is registered against them with an authenticity that defies and confutes the dictates of their best principles. The gospel tells them they are not priests; but the prayer-book, their ordination, their oaths, their subscriptions, the canons of their church, and the whole frame of the episcopal machinery, prove that they are: and this is one of those bitter torments of the conscience which has caused many a clergyman either to escape from his bondage by an open nonconformity, or to pass through life with a painful burthen of secret sorrow.

The words pronounced at the ordination of a clergy-

man for priestly orders are insurmountable : “ Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the church of God, now committed to thee by the imposition of our hands: whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain they are retained.” It is needless to expatiate on this formula, for it requires no comment, and is as clear in papal doctrine as it is possible to make it, and is a natural foundation for the following corollary—the well known absolution of a dying man, by a clergyman, according to the Prayer Book,—“ By the authority of Jesus Christ, committed to me, I absolve thee from all sins in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

When Charles II. was dying, his brother James introduced father Huddleston for the purpose of administering extreme unction to the royal deceiver, and used these words on that memorable occasion: “ Sir, this worthy man once saved your life (in the battle of Worcester) *he now comes to save your soul.*” * And James said right, according to his creed, and that of the Prayer Book, for if a priest can forgive sins he can save a soul. He is none other than a Saviour—he has the attributes of Christ himself who is exalted as a Prince in Israel to give repentance and remission of sins—“ Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered”—“ To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness.”

Now though the evangelical clergy endeavour to forget their yoke, or excuse themselves by protesting that they never use the prescribed form of absolution, and never consider themselves as priests in any sense, yet what are all these excuses but the vain efforts of men reduced to inextricable difficulties? Is it not pitiable to hear pious ministers of the gospel defending

* Lingard xiii. 377.

their conduct by subterfuges which cannot persuade any one of their sincerity? Is not this an awful spectacle to behold in the church of Christ? *We*, however, who stand by as spectators, do not forget that declaration which every beneficed clergyman has openly read before his congregation:—"I, A. B., do hereby declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the book of Common Prayer and administration of sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the church, according to the use of the church of England, together with the Psalter or Psalms of David, pointed, as they are, to be sung or said in churches, and *the form or manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of bishops, priests, and deacons.*"

What evangelical clergyman shall, after having made this declaration, dare to say that he is not a priest in the full sense of the word, and that he is not compelled to carry about with him the pretended prerogative of absolution, impious in a Roman Catholic priest, but ridiculous as well as impious in a Protestant minister?

But it is unnecessary to press these considerations; the pressure is great enough already where cupidity or ambition has not seared the conscience, and where they have, it is in vain to address the language of expostulation or reproof. Here, then, we need only pause awhile to bestow the passing tribute of a sigh on an enslaved portion of the church of Christ: for when we reflect on the zeal and piety of many of the evangelical clergy, and the strong hold they possess on the affections of their people—when we observe their strenuous efforts to save the souls of men—when we listen to their moving appeals to *the conscience*, and their solemn warnings to a heedless generation, of the constant scrutiny of that all-seeing eye which examines the very reins and the heart, and then think of

their shameful connexion with a shameful and secular establishment, all of whose offences they virtually uphold by acting under its discipline, binding themselves with its declarations and subscriptions, and obeying its secular and world-begotten bishops with real or simulated alacrity—how can we help acknowledging that they are acting a part which cannot bear examination by the plain truth of the gospel, and which must be condemned because it is not, and cannot be a sin of ignorance.

And, truly, but for these considerations, what can appear more delightful than a country village, under the pastoral care of a pious and respected clergyman? We go through the little street of cottages, feeling well assured that every one of those neat and humble mansions, will, on the next Sabbath, send forth some, if not all, of its inhabitants to the old church, to hear the gospel well and truly preached. When the sacred day arrives, and the village bells have finished their melodious invitation to prayer, we enter the venerable building, and after a liturgy, which antiquity has rendered respectable, and good taste dignified and harmonious, we listen to a plain and affectionate discourse, in the old reformer's style, truly setting forth the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the love of Jehovah to his covenant people;—the preacher is a grave divine, with well marked traces of deep piety and serious thought on his countenance; his language is somewhat quaint and antiquated,—not by design, but by habit, and owing to a constant and affectionate acquaintance with the old school of sound divinity. We visit the cottages, and direct our conversation towards “the vicar,”—we hear nothing but expressions of respect, admiration, and gratitude. The living trust that they are on the road to Zion, through the teaching and ministry of their honoured spiritual guide, and they are sure that some of the dead—their dear friends and

relations—are already in heaven, through a knowledge of the truth, which they first heard from his lips. But no! *all* in the parish do not love the vicar;—there are a few vile and desperate characters,—three or four poachers, two or three incurable sots, and the licentious mothers of some unhappy children born out of matrimony: these sinners hate “their pastor,”—they call him “a hypocrite,” and have their lies and scurrilous tales against him. This is his greatest praise; it is more to be valued, in our apprehension, than the applause of all the other inhabitants; for it proves that they hate a righteous man because their own deeds are evil, and because he reproves them, and is as faithful in warning sinners of judgment to come, as he is in leading on “the good and faithful servants” to expect in faith “the joy and kingdom of their Lord.”

Thus, then, righteousness is flourishing in the village: the manners of the villagers are courteous and obliging,—the brawlers and gossipers are not masters of the street,—the children are not neglected,—the schools are judiciously and piously managed, and are well attended;—the pastor is the soul of every movement in favour of a moral improvement; he suggests, cherishes, and supports all that is good, and discountenances, and at least drives into a shame-faced secrecy, all that is bad. There is an air of peace in the village,—the vicarage seems the abode of peace,—we know that a good man is in it, who rules by love amongst the people. We begin to love the old church for his sake; we forget our stern nonconformity,—antiquity resumes its witchcraft power over our senses,—the old arched windows, the painted glass, the groined roof, the patrician monuments of knights and dames, the ivy-mantled tower, the curfew-bell, and even the vesper-owl, that sallies forth with downy wing, for his night’s excursion, all have charms for our tranquillized meditations; and because a good man has appeased us,

we are in danger of lapsing into respect for a vicious system. But no,—we remember what the parish was before the good man came to it, and we foresee what it will be again when he shall have passed into a better country. A Dean and Chapter are the patrons of the living, or a noble politician, or an irreligious and jobbing chancellor;—the next vicar is already pointed out, either a rapacious cormorant, who has already stuffed his maw with three or four fat benefices, or the third son of the great lord of the district, a famous fox-hunter and an unerring shot. The consequences will be inevitable; but we need not describe them, for “gross darkness will cover the people.”

And this is the church of England! and of this church “the good man” is not only a member, but a prime support, and to all the evils of the system he has made himself a party; *he is one of those that uphold the system by accepting office under it.*

This makes us remember all the blots and blurs of the Prayer Book,—the priestcraft it inculcates, the absolution, the burial and baptismal services, the blasphemous office for King Charles the martyr, and all its other flagrant faults which clergymen, and none so much as clergymen, have frequently and indignantly exposed. Then we proceed onwards to “the unfeigned assent and consent,” and, last of all, to the bishops, the “good man’s” masters,—to the bishops in parliament, the bishops at court, the bishops buying-in to the funds, and heaping up their scandalous treasure!

Thus, then, our nonconformity returns; the peaceful village loses its charms, a cloud passes over its sunshine, the vicarage is thrown into the shade, the bells lose their melody, and clang harshly into our ears, “church and state;” and as, with a heavy heart, we take up our pilgrim’s staff, to continue our journey through a woeful world, we confess that the serpent still defiles every earthly paradise, and that all on this side of the grave is “vanity, and vexation of spirit.”

LETTER VII.

It is an inevitable result of a sacerdotal institution, that the privileged persons belonging to that class should be considered *holy*, and that evidences of greater holiness should be sought for in them than in "the laity." If priests are conscientious men, they do in consequence adapt their conduct to the opinion entertained of their order, both because they think it a duty which they owe to God and man, and because they perceive that the honour of their priesthood is concerned in their strict and self-denying deportment. If they are hypocrites, they pay great attention to external appearances, and in the seemly robe of pharisaical simulation, indulge the desires of the flesh with so much caution and secresy as to evade the criticisms of a censorious world: but if they are neither conscientious men nor hypocrites, then do they openly set the priestly office at defiance, and enter into the sinful pleasures of the day without dissimulation or attempt at concealment.

It is well known how large a share of blame and unpopularity has attached to the Anglican priests, owing to the irreverent conduct of many of their order, and how loudly the public voice has been raised, though in vain, to reprobate those clergymen who, living lives of pleasure, are to be found in the chase, the ball-room, the rout, or the theatre, to the no small vexation of their stricter brethren. The theory of the

superior sanctity of priests, is the basis of most of the episcopal charges, and nothing is more common than to hear a sober priest lauded for living "as a clergyman ought to do."

This idea, as might be expected, prevails also to a considerable extent in dissenting churches; it can be traced in the conversation and habit of thinking, both of the ministers and the people, and is conspicuous enough in some published ordination sermons. Many of the older nonconformists, and particularly of the Presbyterian school, have written most solemnly on the sanctity of the ministerial character, and none more eloquently or with greater seriousness than the renowned Baxter, who seems to have thought that a Christian minister should aim and arrive at a degree of piety and holiness unknown to an ordinary believer, and that he ought to be a sort of incarnate Seraph, glowing with a vivid sanctity far above the inferior spirits of the church militant.

The following passage from Robert Hall, as conveying the sentiments of a modern divine of high repute, may serve for a specimen of the sort of language which ministers indulge in when expatiating on the sanctity of their office and character:—"Instead of satisfying ourselves in the acquisition of virtue with the attainments of a learner, we must aspire to the perfection of a master; and give to our conduct the character of a pattern. We are called to such a conquest over the world, and such an exhibition of the spirit of Christ, as shall not merely exempt us from censure, but excite to emulation. 'Ye are the salt of the earth, ye are the light of the world,' said our Saviour to his disciples, *whom he was about to send forth in the character of public teachers.*"* As persons to whom the conduct of

* This certainly does not appear from Scripture: the passage referred to (Matt. v. 13, 14,) is addressed to the disciples on the

souls is committed, we cannot make a wrong step without endangering the interests of others; so that if we neglect to take our soundings, and inspect our chart, ours is the misconduct of the pilot, who is denied the privilege of perishing alone. The immoral conduct of a Christian minister is little less than a public triumph over the religion he inculcates; and when we recollect the frailty of our nature, the snares to which we are exposed, and the wiles of our adversary, who will proportion his efforts to the advantages resulting from the success, we must be aware how much the necessity of maintaining an exemplary conduct adds to the difficulty of the ministerial function."

This passage is, indeed, when compared with others of a kindred spirit, but a moderate exhibition of the doctrine I refer to, and for its moderation I have selected it; but it is sufficient for my purpose to shew the prevailing tendency towards an undue exaltation of the ministerial office. The historical origin of this doctrine has been already examined; it is by emanation and imitation from the church of England, though it must be almost superfluous to examine its soundness; for if it were true that ministers ought to be *more* holy than other believers, then it would follow not only that other believers may be less holy than ministers, but that there must be a brighter crown of glory reserved for the ministerial order, seeing that the promise of the autopsy is to holiness (Heb. xii. 14.) The next step from this theory would be to covet the priestly office for the purpose of going to heaven, and so

—— "dying to put on the weeds of Dominic,
Or in Franciscan hope to pass disguised."

Mount, probably a large multitude of hearers, certainly not a convocation of ministers only. The clause of this advice concludes with a sentence manifestly for all believers, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

In the churches of Rome and England, they do indeed talk of their “*holy orders*,” but it is a singular fact, that while there is not a word about holy orders in the New Testament, and the epithet *holy* is but once or twice employed to designate the apostles themselves, it is applied as the common designation of the brethren of the church. They are “*holy brethren*,” *holy* brethren who are “partakers of the heavenly calling,” who are “saved and called with a *holy* calling,” who are “chosen that they should be *holy* and without blame,” who are exhorted in prayer “to lift up *holy* hands, to present their bodies a living sacrifice, *holy*, acceptable to the Lord,” whose bodies are *holy* because they are the temple of God; who are “a *holy* priesthood.”*

These scriptural truths ought seriously to be remembered, not only for the confutation of all dogmas tinged with papal ideas, but to prevent the possibility of Christians entertaining the mistaken notion that there are two grades of holiness in the church, and that ministers are on a spiritual eminence above their brethren, the household of faith. Some Christians, members of churches, from which one would have hoped all such popish notions had been utterly banished, are in this error, and seem to think that they may do with impunity what a minister might not, or that an act of “innocent” mirth or relaxation on their part, would be a grievous indecorum in their pastor! It is not surprising to me that such an error prevails, for all that I have endeavoured to detect in the course of these letters, tends directly to establish it; and certainly it could not be, that so many guide posts to sacerdotalism should fail to bring the feet of some wanderers to the gates of the city which sitteth on seven hills. But, indeed, this error not only may be

* Stratten's Book of the Priesthood, pp. 279-280.

made an excuse for two grades of holiness, but has a tendency to keep in the back-ground, the glory of Christ in collecting all believers into his kingdom, as they are in union with Him, and as by his righteousness they are made the righteous nation. We know that because the Son of God did love righteousness and hate iniquity, therefore God has anointed Him with the oil of gladness above his fellows, that He is anointed High Priest of the church, that all the unction of the Holy Ghost is first on Him, and then from Him descends to his people "the skirts of his garments." That He is the mighty Aaron, on the holy hill of Zion, and that all who are written in his book of life, are one with Him and are holy Levites,—are "kings and priests unto God and their Father." The church is by this union "the fair and spotless bride," because there is no beauty in the moral world to be compared with the splendour of holiness, which she has through Christ her Head. She shall be called "the Lord our righteousness." This is the great mystery, which no wit of man could possibly invent; it came from the throne of the Almighty God of Israel; God the Holy Ghost has taught it, and God the Son died, and revived, and rose again to bestow it on his church, as the transcendent mystery of his divine redemption.

Let us cherish this doctrine! Nothing more precious than this will ever come down from heaven again, till the Lord himself shall appear in majesty at the restitution of all things. Let us tell believers that they are holy in Christ,—that it is their privilege, their wisdom, their righteousness, their sanctification and redemption to cleave to Him, and to be in Him: that they are to lift up their eyes to Him as their life, their pattern, their all; and then, as eyes dazzled with looking at the sun do, when they turn to behold this opaquous earth, see nothing but confusion and darkness,—so

will they, with this gaze at the glory of the Sun of Righteousness, be able to see nothing in their poor sinful fellow-creatures that is not dark, mean, and blurred, excepting where they too are shining with the reflected blaze of the Sovereign Sun, and are, by beholding Him, transforming from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord.

“ And this honour have ALL HIS SAINTS.”

LETTER VIII.

LEARNING has ever been considered as a proper appendage of a priesthood; it has been its decoration from the earliest times of which we have any record. Beyond the Indus, the Brahminical caste are supposed to have been the schoolmasters of their ancient nation, and the nurses of its civilization many centuries before the brilliant period of Grecian history. In the creed of that wonderful priesthood, existing with great power, even in these days, it is taught that the Brahminical order came forth from the mouth of Brahm, or the Supreme Being, and that it is therefore their privilege and duty to be the teachers of the rest of mankind, who were produced from the inferior parts of Brahm's great body. The priests of India are "the mouth of God" to the people, and with this prerogative they claim a right of teaching mankind all the doctrine of the soul and its salvation, the purification and lustration which it can accomplish by oracular rites and atoning penances, the mysteries of the stars and of the heavens, the mysteries of the earth, and all the secrets of nature, which they disguise with furious fables, and pervert with enormous lies.

The priests of Egypt, and of old Ethiopia, Egypt's mother land, were renowned for their learning; their theology was, indeed, roguery, and the learning a good deal mixed with fraud; but still they were men of

erudition and science: and even amongst the Druids it is supposed that there was hived no inconsiderable store of knowledge, as the unfailing aliment of priestly authority over an ignorant and uninstructed people.

The sacerdotal order has long ago discovered that knowledge is power, and has therefore been anxious not only to work this lever of dominion with its own hands, but to prevent any others from touching it. In short, wherever we turn our eyes, from occidental Mexico to "utmost Indian isle Taprobane," from the sage Aztecs to the primitive Buddhists of the Eastern Archipelago, we shall ever find that priests have claimed as exclusive a right to the keys of knowledge as to the keys of the church. The Romish clergy, who have always been famous for persecuting and imitating the heathen priests, did, as a matter of course, assert that they were the only authorized teachers of mankind; and we know that for a long period none but the priests had any pretensions to scholarship, contemptible as it was in those days of ignorance. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, the church of Rome had many learned men in her vast armies of seculars or regulars, and the church of England came forth from the church of Rome at that very time, when learning was in high repute, and when Rome could boast of some of her profoundest scholars. The controversy between the papacy and Elizabeth's church, was carried on not only by plots of assassination on one side, and by trials for high treason on the other, but by the vigorous collision of powerful intellects, by the war of the pen, and the indefatigable labours of the press. The early Protestant prelates were men of eminent learning; the contest between them and the popish advocates turned chiefly on tradition and the authority of the fathers,—a field of argument which requires the most extensive reading and the most thorough acquaintance with eccle-

siastical history. By tradition also they defended themselves against the Presbyterians; for the church of England, in its defensive as well as offensive warfare, has ever placed its strength more in tradition than in the word of God.

The splendid dowry which the dominant sect has received from the state, is, in these days, stoutly defended, on the plea that vast wealth is a necessary bribe for learning, and that if "the great prizes" should be withdrawn from the church, the priesthood, having no longer a temptation to erudition, would sink into profound ignorance, and thus a middle age darkness settle on the nation. We hear it everywhere repeated that the clergy *are* "learned men," an assertion essentially false, as must be confessed by all, even of the clerical party who are capable of understanding what learning really is, or who have candour to confess what they know to be true; but still it is repeated that the clergy *are* learned, and thus the idea is cherished, that the Anglican priests are, in this respect, equal, at least, with the priests of all other established religions.

From all that has been already urged, it must be anticipated that I am to find a parallel in this point amongst the dissenters; and this is, certainly, no difficult task; for "a learned ministry" is no where more highly esteemed than amongst the calvinistic dissenters. The *Congregational Magazine** has lately asserted, that the body of the nonconformist ministers are as learned as their brethren (*i. e.* priests) of the "dominant sect." In exegetical and hermeneutical theology I think they are decidedly more learned than the established clergy, whilst in classical attainments they are beneath them: for it is a fact, well known, that, at the two great universities, and especially at

* Cong. Mag. cxxxiii. pp. 48.

Cambridge, theology is so little studied, taught, or encouraged, that the clerical candidates do sometimes approach episcopal ordinations in a state of extreme ignorance on those subjects in which it would be but decent that they should have *some* information. This truth is so apparent that a notorious prelate has lately talked of establishing a theological school to prepare the candidates for examination, and to furnish them with that theology which they failed to acquire at the university; and yet it is extremely probable that these young gentlemen, whose pinions are ingloriously plumed by a bishop's chaplain, would be able to pass a brilliant examination in Greek tragedies and comedies, in Greek and Latin versification, or in a course of pure mathematics.

There is more knowledge of the Hebrew language amongst dissenting ministers than amongst the clergy; but in a critical knowledge of the Greek, the clergy excel the nonconformists: in a general acquaintance with *history*, and the range of the belles lettres, the superiority is again with the "learned" clergy; but in those things which it behoves erudite Levites to understand—that is, in all *clerical lore*—in all solid divinity—the nonconformist ministers far surpass their well-paid antagonists.* I must, however, observe that this com-

* The argument in favour of "the great prizes" in the established church, as solid rewards for learning, was invented by the rapacious and unprincipled Bentley; and has, since his days, been frequently used by the clergy, when pressed hard for an excuse of their vast wealth. Well may the bishoprics and other wealthy emoluments of the church be called "prizes," so rarely do the learned clergy draw one from fortune's wheel—so frequently are they disappointed with "a blank!" Look at the rich priests of our day, and then count up the learned ones amongst them! look at the men of letters amongst them, and see how they are neglected! As an illustration of the neglect in which the learned are allowed to "dwindle, peak, and pine," I would refer to the Rev. S. T. Bloomfield, the truly erudite and laborious editor of the Greek

parison (a comparison which I have endeavoured to make with the strictest impartiality) is greatly in favour of the dissenting ministers *as a body*, for if they should be compared with the whole multitude of the clergy, and not with the men of letters amongst the clerical order, their superiority would be immense, seeing that the ignorance of the majority of the privileged corporation is very great; nor can it be otherwise, as we must at once perceive, when we duly consider the inevitable effects of the mercenary mode of preferment, and the marketable state of the pastoral office in the Anglican church. It is quite true, that every clergyman must first have been educated at one of "the learned universities;" and it is also quite true, that they are all by courtesy called "learned men;" but if we look a little deeper than the surface of things, we shall find that the attainment of a degree at Oxford or Cambridge is no proof of erudition. It proves only that a young gentleman has spent three very jocund

Testament, and of other works in high esteem amongst the learned, on the Continent and in America, not less than in this country. Thus Dr. Bloomfield speaks in the preface to his second edition of the Greek Testament: "The author has only to add, that having fairly done his best, he commits his work to the candour of the public with some confidence—at least from the consciousness of having *endeavoured well*: and though he shrinks not from any fair or candid criticism, yet it might disarm the ruthlessness of even a thorough-paced critic, if he could know the extent of the difficulties, of all sorts, with which the author had continually to struggle in his progress through this work: in the prosecution of which he not only had constantly upon the charge of two parishes (and thus was continually obliged to carry forward his labours ἐν παρείργῳ), but has suffered under the continual pressure of those carking cares that drag down the mind to earth, necessarily involved in scanty, precarious, and continually decreasing resources"

Thus is this eminent scholar left to starve on two curacies, whilst the more fortunate ignoramuses of the aristocracy are loaded with pluralities, heaped without shame on their worthless heads!

years amongst his merry compeers; and by three or four months reading of three or four subjects has passed the ordeal of an examination requisite for a degree. The majority of the Anglican priests are hewn out of this quarry. The comparison of learning is not, therefore, to be made with the great multitude of the priests, but with the men of letters in their order.

LETTER IX.

We have thus seen that the episcopal and congregational ministers unite in the opinion, that a learned ministry is indispensable in the service of the church of Christ. I know full well that this is also a general received opinion throughout the land, and that few, perhaps, except the quakers,* would hesitate to give their "unfeigned assent and consent" to its uncontested orthodoxy. But the universality of an opinion ought not to add to its authority with an inquiring mind, or rather it ought to make the inquirer suspect that it may possibly be a universal delusion, fit only to be classed with the exploded prejudice that "the earth is the centre of the universe," or that "nature abhors a vacuum." The more we study the history of opinions, the more we shall discover that they have owed their renown and their great authority to preconceived notions and traditional decrees of antiquity; and if this be true of the opinions hitherto entertained of nature's laws, or the public institutions of civilized society, much more is it likely to be true concerning

* The rulers of methodism have lately, under Jabez Bunting's guidance, made a dangerous effort to introduce learning into their sect. It is an experiment which, if persevered in, will, probably, create contending elements, where peace has hitherto prevailed. The conference, according to the constant policy of priests, are for learning; the people are well content that the primitive arrangements should continue.

theologic opinions, which, for the most part, have been compelled to pass through the turbid passions or prejudices of various sects, and, therefore, have small chance of resembling "the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal." What a multitude of theologians do, to this very day, consider it little less than a self-evident truth in Christianity that the church ought to be united to the state, and that it is the duty of the state to uphold and protect, in an especial manner, some one sect more than the rest! It is true that this gross error derives much of its strength from the interested passions of the parties who entertain it; but, nevertheless, it is a general creed of the ignorant and the uninstructed in all ranks of life; for I have ever found that those persons whose lives are free from all religious and moral restraint, and who even hold all piety in utter contempt, are, nevertheless, fully possessed with the idea that the state "ought to support religion" (meaning thereby an established church); and that, if this support should be withdrawn, society would fall into a frightful state of anarchy. All the heathen philosophers, or nearly all, were, for "the union of church and state," and indeed the natural man is, generally speaking, an advocate of the doctrine, which, in spite of this general approbation, is a pernicious and deadly principle of Antichrist.

"The necessity of a learned ministry" is, perhaps, more popular and more approaching to universal, than any other opinion; for it has not, like some others, to struggle with party opposition, and may be entertained by all sects without offending any. I, nevertheless, suspect that it is to be classed amongst the untenable errors of the Christian commonwealth, and that its wisdom is based on the rudiments of this world, and on that philosophy which there is an express command to avoid.

It is incumbent on us to remember, and we never

can be too deeply impressed with this important truth, *that the church of Christ is not like other bodies*; it is not a sanhedrim of argute and subtile rabbis, nor a senate of a learned university; nor a parliament of literati, convoked for the purpose of unveiling the face of the universal Isis, and of displaying all the close secrets of the mighty mother, by a strict analysis of her perplexing phœnomena; but it is a body of illuminated and regenerated saints, who once were darkness, but are now light, and who profess to have received a spiritual knowledge by the immediate teaching of God, concerning mysteries which the rest of the world neither accepts, nor admires, nor understands.

This is a truth so copiously taught in the Scriptures, and so largely admitted by all pious writers, that it is scarcely necessary to insist on it, or to quote strong passages to the purpose, from authors whose names carry weight with serious Christians. When we unfold the pages of Scripture, how frequently do we find it declared, that man in his natural state, and before grace received, is profoundly ignorant of the truths of salvation!—that the Almighty promises to give light, to teach, direct, and lead into the truth those who follow him as their guide, and, in a holy humility, “acknowledge him in all their ways, and lean not on their own understanding,”—that it is the office of the Holy Ghost, through the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for his glory to execute this promise of the Father,—that the language of the saints is, in consequence of this economy, the language of suppliants, daily living on the supplies which they receive from the throne of grace, acknowledging their ignorance, feebleness, waywardness, and proclivity to sin, mingled with moving prayers for farther light and deeper instruction from God himself! “O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes,—O let me not wander from thy commandments,—open thou mine eyes that

I may behold wondrous things out of thy law—quicken thou me according to thy word,—make me to understand the way of thy precepts,—strengthen me according to thy word,—teach me the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end,—uphold thou me according to thy word, that I may live,—make thy face to shine upon thy servant, and teach me thy statutes,—lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness,—lead me in thy truth,—lead me in a plain path, send forth thy light and thy truth, and let them lead me,—teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God ;”—these are the cries of the Lord’s people, thirsting in the dry land where no water is, for “ the small rain upon the tender herb, and the showers upon the grass ; ”—they are not ashamed to confess their weakness, ignorance, and helplessness, knowing that they have many precious promises of help for all their need, as long as they trust to the Great Shepherd of Israel, and not to an arm of flesh.

Let it now be remembered that these are the wishes and the words of the regenerated people,—the voice of the church as a suppliant,—earnestly begging for donations of grace from God himself. Could “ a learned ministry ” help the church in these spiritual straits ? Could that which we fairly and usually mean by the word “ learning ” be available in difficulties like these ? assuredly not ; but a minister *learned in the word of God*, well read in the Scriptures, deeply practised in the school of prayer, and trained-up in the wholesome discipline of many tribulations, might render some assistance, not indeed by giving one drachm of grace, for that is out of the reach of all the angels of heaven, but by helping together in prayer, and by setting forth those truths which experience has found useful for strengthening faith in the hour of trial. “ Blessed be the God of all comfort,” said Paul, “ who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we

may be able to comfort them which are in trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." This was Paul's ministry to the church in her straits and sorrows, he never thought of bringing his learning to bear on cases like these.

But what do we find in Scripture of the sort of teaching requisite for the unregenerate? — "the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not."—"Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord"—"having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of the heart,"—"held under the power of darkness"—"the God of this world hath blinded the eyes of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them—"the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned:—"the veil is yet on their hearts when they read the law;"—"not many wise men after the flesh are called, for God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."

This being the description of the mental malady of the unregenerate in scripture, which may be all summoned up in one expression, "blindness of the heart" what is the remedy? Even in this promise, "*I will give them a heart to know me.*"

When the Scriptures speak of blindness of heart, they inform us that the understanding has contracted a distaste and aversion to the truths of God, as revealed in Christ, through the corruption and sinfulness of the heart, or the affections; and that this is a rank and sore disease, and difficult to be handled, because they who are in its power know not that they have it; for as their intellects are clear, perhaps, to the attainment of physical and moral truths, so they cannot believe that

they are not fully competent to understand the Scriptures when they read them, or that the faith of God's elect is a mystery to them, when they peruse the texts which teach it; "the veil is on their hearts,"—no mortal teacher can possibly remove it; the learnedest, yea, and the soundest, and the most spiritual, preachers can not reach the adytum where the veil is; they may unlock all the avenues leading to it, but the key of the citadel—the heart itself—is in the hands of God alone. This truth was pressed on the Jews by our Lord,—"No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him: it is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God; every man that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." We see, therefore, the unspeakable value of that promise, "I will give them a heart to know me."

It, therefore, being evident that the aliens from the commonwealth of Israel are brought into the holy city by Him who is King in Zion; that He is the teacher of the converts, in whatever way his teaching is dispensed; and his ways are manifold; and it being further evident that the consolations of the afflicted Christians, their safe conduct through the wilderness, and their immediate help in all the vast variety of their difficulties, are from that hand that led Israel out of Egypt, we see left but small scope for those achievements which are expected from Learning, when introduced as an auxiliary to the gospel. But, indeed, this auxiliary, in spite of his high renown, can do nothing but defend some of the outworks of the Church's territories; he may, perhaps, rout the Socinian or popish sophisters in a battle field far distant from Zion, but he never can lead captive one of Jehovah's enemies; he never can put God's law into the heart, where the principles of rebellion already predominate. No; the reduction of the rebellious is a task reserved

for Him who went up on high, and led captivity captive; it is his province "to rule in the midst of his opponents," for his "arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under Him."

To conclude this argument, then, we may state two very important truths:—1st. That the first preaching of the gospel was not by a learned ministry. 2nd. That multitudes, even in this generation, have been converted through the ministry of those who had not the slightest pretensions to learning.

The first of these propositions is more than one argument,—it is almost all that is to be proved; I must, therefore, make sure footing here, and repeat, that the ministry of the apostolical times was *not* a learned ministry; from which it will follow, that learning in Christian teachers is something more than was required in the apostolical days, and that unless the need of it is so great, by some extraordinary change of circumstances, as to reduce the church to extremities if she be any longer deprived of its assistance, it is as little to be desired as a prelate's diocesan mitre, or any other figment of man. But there is nothing in the New Testament intimating that at some future day it would be requisite to make preachers of the gospel learned men; nothing which can be forced into such a *prophecy*,—for prophecy it must be, seeing that nothing of the sort was known in the apostolical age.

Let this argument be well weighed; for as in the great controversy between dissenters and the dominant sect, or rather between the nation and the priests, we rightly demand Scripture authority for the lawless position of the established church, and declare that a church of the gospel must be gauged by the gospel; so ought we be able to shew that the cherished strength of the dissenting churches is something which rests on the clear authority of the New Testament.

LETTER X.

THE advocates of pulpit-learning, being destitute of any direct proof from the New Testament to support their views, must be driven to indirect proofs, to analogies and inferences, to probabilities and conjectures, and to such methods of reasoning as would be more than plausible in any other question, than that which at present engages our attention.

They may tell us that as Israel took of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold,—as David consecrated to the Lord the spoils of the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and all nations which he subdued,—as the crown of the king of Rabbah, was set upon the head of David,—so the spoils of all secular learning should be dedicated to the church, and to the use of the church. They may triumphantly recount to us the famous ecclesiastics who have hung up heathen trophies in the sanctuary—Clemens Alexandrinus, Justin, Athenagoras, Cyril, Lactantius, Jerome, Augustin, Basil, Nazienzen, Arnobius, and others; not to mention the elaborate researches of the Benedictines and Jesuits, the learned labours of monkish missionaries in eastern climes, and the magnificent zeal of various cardinals and prelates of the popish communion, who, either by their own intellectual labours, or their largesses to renowned scholars, have added precious

stores to the hive of theological and oriental erudition. They may point out to us the venerable dignitaries of our Anglican protestant church, in the days of its literary glory, studying in furred gown in college cell, and ransacking the golden veins of ponderous folios, not without some valuable result to the right understanding of chronology, or of history in connexion with divinity. They may direct us to the libraries of the two universities, and shew us how the scholarly puritan, not less than the courtly prelate, loved to muse in the classic shades on the banks of Cam or Isis, and how they brought their careful observation of oriental and occidental antiquities, their skill in philology, and their deep acquaintance with the customs and peculiarities of past ages, to assist in the noble labour of elucidating Scripture.

Then they may urge the necessity of learning in ministers of the gospel, because we live in different times and countries; we are moderns in the west, but the apostles and their churches were ancients in the east; the whole frame of society is changed; the customs, manners, ceremonies, habits of thinking are completely altered—the phenomena of nature are varied; our civil, social, and religious conditions are essentially different from those of old Palestine; the arts of life, and the productions of nature, are all dissimilar; and the Scriptures are consequently making frequent allusions to moral and physical peculiarities, which we cannot comprehend; wherefore, to master all these difficulties, besides the difficulties and obscurities of a translated tongue, we stand in need of an instructed ministry, whose business it is to explain the Scriptures thoroughly to their congregations, and to leave nothing in uncertainty.

Now, to all these things what shall we say?—Even this, that Christ is “the power of God, and the wisdom of God,” that “He is made unto us wisdom,”

and that in Him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." It is, indeed, our business to search the Scriptures; but why? because they testify of Him; that He is the wisdom of God, in a mystery; the hidden wisdom; the like whereof is not to be found in any course of reading,—in any volume in the world, except only in the Scriptures of truth. By far the greater part of those things of which learned men have written, in their endeavours to elucidate the Bible, are the mere outside—the mere shell of the truth; they relate to matters which are incidental—mere accidents—mere casualties; things which have no savour of life in them—nothing that can profit, illuminate, or edify the Christian,—nothing that can contribute to the spiritual information of one that is seeking for the truth.

"The second Adam, the Lord Jesus from heaven, is a quickening spirit:" it is true that He was in the flesh, and in the flesh went about doing good; and having fulfilled all righteousness, was slain with vast anguish of body, that He might bear our sorrows and carry our grief, and that we might have redemption through his blood—the forgiveness of sins. It is also true that we have sufficient record of his actions as the son of Mary, and as the supposed "son of the carpenter;" but it is also evident that his actions as a man are recorded in a very slight and shadowy manner; that all those minute circumstances which render biography intensely interesting are passed over, leaving to us no small scope for our curiosity to discover that which is hid from our gaze. But these tantalizing omissions are, I doubt not, intentional; ordered so by the Almighty, who, knowing the tendency of the human mind to fix on things sensible, and to pretermitt things spiritual, has most wisely ordered that we should know of the Messiah sufficient for rational evidence of his holy humanity, but very far less than could satisfy

the eager demands of our curiosity. “There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.”

If the choice were given to the people of Christendom to select of these unpublished doings of Jesus, may we not be certain that they would earnestly desire to have copious information of circumstances which would fill up all the vacancies in his biography; minute accounts of his life, daily actions, friends, and family; and be grievously disappointed if they were to be supplied only with our Lord’s sermons, and mere dry notices of the places where he delivered them?

Now, it is precisely in those curious matters that learning is chiefly exercised in elucidating the gospel,—in places, dates, customs, antiquities, oriental allusions, productions of the soil, geography, &c.; but the Lord Jesus is a quickening spirit, and it should be our desire to know Him, as He lives for us near the throne of grace; or as Paul expresses it, “to know the exceeding greatness of God’s power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places.”

Dr. Owen has well commented on these words,—“So much as we know of Christ, his sufferings, and his glory, so much do we understand of the Scriptures, and no more.”

If, then, the Scriptures should be studied by Christians as a volume of oriental history and antiquities, or as a tome of the Indo-Persian* metaphysics,

* Dupuis and others after him endeavoured to prove that the Christian faith is an eclectic system of Indo-Persian origin.

the arguments for a learned ministry might be valid; for I know not how we could understand the Shasters, the Bhagavad-Geeta, the Puranas, or the institutes of Menu, without collateral information relating to Hindoo customs; but as we know that the Holy Spirit has dictated the Scriptures to be the word of general life; the language for all nations; the voice that talks with the hearts of all men, in every latitude of this terraqueous globe; and as the Gospels are written in the plainest and simplest style, and with this express object, that they might be universally understood; and when we observe how that “the going forth of the word giveth light—giveth wisdom—unto the simple”; how savage nations, lately converted, embrace the truth in its naked simplicity, with all joy, and for all purposes of salvation, joyfully understand the Scriptures;—how “poor and ignorant” men and women oftentimes display a surprising knowledge of the word of God, compelling us, with all gratitude, to confess that the Great Teacher has anointed them with the unction of evangelical understanding; whilst, on the other hand, learned scholars, yea, and mitred doctors, deeply soked in Greek and Latin, display the most childish ignorance of the gospel in their sermons or published books; then are we compelled to acknowledge that learning is of little benefit in the pulpit; is not wanted; works little good when it is there; is no necessary adjunct for a preacher of the gospel; does not, in fact, help him, and often is the cause of excessive mischief and confusion in the church.

A learned theologian may perhaps consider himself greatly exalted above an unlearned student of the Scriptures, and may perhaps pity the pious multitude, who, versed only in their mother-tongue, and having no help but a Concordance or a Bible of references, wander in the dark through the vast wilderness of oriental allusions, and are utterly at fault in some

points where erudition could give many a curious and sometimes an interesting explanation. Michaelis, in the pride of learning, has ventured to assert, that no one ignorant of rabbinical lore can possibly understand the Sermon on the Mount; a most astounding falsehood of academic arrogance! For though a pious Christian who never studied the Talmuds, the Chaldee paraphrast, the Gemara, the Medrasch Tanchuma, or the Targum of Onkelos and Jonathan, nor ever heard of their existence, may, in consequence, be totally unaware of some Judaic allusions, which Michaelis and others suppose they have discovered in the New Testament, yet he will know all that it concerns him to know for guidance and instruction, and will be infinitely less likely to make mistakes in the interpretation of Scripture with the help of the High and Holy Teacher to whom he has in all humility entrusted his understanding, than if he sat down to hunt for hidden curiosities with all the accuracy of a Gesenius or the subtlety of an Eichorn.

There are many manifest inconveniences as there are also some advantages in applying learning to the study of the Scriptures, but I fear that the disadvantages greatly preponderate *when the range of erudite theology is entrusted to the ministry*. I need not here appeal to history to prove how many disastrous heresies and schisms have sprung up in the church from the hotbed of human learning; how many wars and tumults have arisen from the controversies and argute disputations of learned divines. Baronius has asserted that the greater part of all heresies have originated not with the ignorant multitude, but with men of much intellect and research,—with men of talent and of elevated station in the church,—with bishops and high dignitaries, who began with disputations and dexterous cavils, and ended with schism and open rebellion. Dr. Owen, himself one of the learnedest of divines,

has remarked, that it would be difficult to sum up all the mischief that has desolated the church through the labours of ecclesiastics, with subtile heads but unsanctified hearts: and the truth of this remark we can ourselves verify, by turning our eyes to Germany, where the tribe of neologists and sceptics are constantly rising to the surface with some curious jewel of unbelief, fished up with infinite labour from the deeps of hell,—or to America, where the portals of theologic seminaries are pouring forth clouds of Pelagian and Sabellian locusts, “like horses prepared unto battle, and with faces as the faces of men.”

LETTER XI.

LET us a little more particularly examine some of the evils adverted to in the last letter.

He that reads the Bible in the old way, seems to be walking with great delight "by a place of broad rivers and streams where goeth no galley with oars;" the waters are silent, majestic, undisturbed; they are "the still waters," and he by faith is constantly catching a glimpse of the Good Shepherd, who leads his flock by the verdant margins, "to make their souls like a watered garden;" he searches that he may find him; but if he finds him not he is distressed and perplexed, and, in the language of holy love, says within himself, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest,—where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside from the flocks of thy companions."

But when he reads the Bible in the new way,—when the glare of modern *exegesis* dazzles his eyes,—when the German light has been let in upon the scene, he seems immediately to stand on the shores of a boundless ocean, whose waves are dark, restless, and conflicting,—“the galleys pass with oars,” and “the gallant ships” in abundance; but it is for an evil trade, and many are shipwrecked before his eyes,—swallowed up in hopeless infidelity. The Good Shepherd is gone; he is no where to be found: all the winds of heaven seem to conspire to drown the very sound of his name, and the hubbub of “primary meanings,”

“orientalisms,” “historical allusions,” “mythic phraseology,” “figurative expressions,” “allegorical types,” “poetical ornaments,” “grammatical constructions,” “usus loquendi,” are called in to the scene, to make confusion worse confounded; and to turn the Scriptures of truth into a volume of dishonest trickery or studied obscurity, whose dark pages none but learned academicians and deep-read scribes can possibly explain.

I give one instance, and it is indeed but one amongst thousands. That portion of the prophecies of Isaiah, beginning with the 13th verse of the 52nd chapter, and ending with the last verse of the 53rd chapter, is so clear a prophecy of Christ, that no unlearned person could possibly doubt its import. In many passages of the New Testament it is made the subject of either direct quotation or allusion, and our Lord himself distinctly referred to it as a portion of Scripture fulfilled by his mission. (Luke xxii. 37.) Evidence like this, one would naturally suppose, must preclude all cavilling on the subject, for no one but a Jew or an avowed unbeliever, would be hardy enough to urge that Jesus Christ and the Apostles were mistaken, and that the prophet had quite another meaning. But learned Christians have shewn themselves not less audacious than Jews, Turks, or Infidels. The school of Christian theology had become amazingly more sharp-sighted, erudite, and sagacious towards the close of the last century; and a swarm of celebrated expositors, under a firm conviction, as one of their own favourite writers frankly expresses it, “that the prophets announce nothing of future events but what they might know and expect, without any special divine inspiration,”—have undertaken to shew that Isaiah had in this passage no prescience of the Redeemer! These elaborate writers suggest, that the subject of the prediction is a “collective” one; that it refers to the whole

Jewish people; to the abstract of the Jewish people; to the pious part of the Jewish people; to the Jewish priesthood; to the prophetic order; to king Hezekiah; to the prophet Jeremiah; to an unknown prophet, killed by the Jews in exile; to the royal race of David who suffered unjustly; to the Maccabees, or to the prophet Isaiah himself! These are the hypotheses of the Döderlins, the Eichorns, the Schusters, the Telges, the Stephani, the Rosenmüllers, the De Wettes, the Geseniuses, the Grotiuses, the Boltens, and divers others of high celebrity in the learned world, who have filled all Europe with the renown of their names, not without a reverberating echo from the transatlantic school of "Celeberrimi."

I have selected this one instance of the audacity of learned men in handling the word of God, both because it is an exhibition of their impiety in attacking one of the noblest bulwarks of the gospel, and because it cannot fail to supply the place of a thousand other instances; for it is obvious, that if the men of letters have dealt thus with prophecy in the splendour of its glory, they must have felt very little scruple in denying and gainsaying the promises of the Holy Spirit where the light shines with a feebler ray. And true it is that if any one wished to draw up a vade-mecum of infidelity, he might easily compile a book from the labours of learned divines, in which every promise of the Messiah, every indication of the gospel would be flatly denied, and opposed with laborious arguments and profound research.

We cannot deny that the school of Germany has produced a race of literary giants and Anaks of intellect, but many of them, alas! are also Goliaths, who defy the armies of the living God; and though some of the vaunting crew would conceal their intention under the guise of Christians, yet we know that their business has been rather to fabricate fiery darts

for the wicked one, than to supply shields of faith for the good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

But it will be said that all this touches not England,* and that in this country the theologues of the dominant and dissenting sects have avoided the neology and rationalism of the German sophists. It should, however, be remembered, that till within the last dozen years we seemed to *know* nothing of the effects of the German school, or to know little more than was brought to us by the vague rumours, and short accounts of some of the most popular works. Lately there has been visible a bias to German literature: we begin now highly to admire their erudition, and may soon, perhaps, proceed to tolerate, and then to adopt, some of their fatal spirit of interpretation. Germany and America have pronounced us a nation of theological ignoramuses, and we have tacitly pleaded guilty to the charge. There are not wanting some dissenting ministers, though very few as yet in number, who are in correspondence with the German divines, and who are known on the continent as well affected to the new school—I do not say in scepticism, but in the fashionable style of “exegesis,” and in that tendency to novelty and recondite discoveries, or pretended discoveries, which is the distinguishing mark of the German theologues. I would put it as a question, and really not as an insinuation, but simply as a question, is it quite certain that those who control the education of dissenting academies, are fully aware of the danger apparently threatening the creed of the Reformation?—have they their eyes fully open to the progress of unsound opinions in the United States of North

* Mr. Milman's Neological History of the Jews may be considered as the first attempt of any of the clergy to introduce the German method of interpreting Scripture into this country; unless, indeed, we are to reckon the Bishop of Peterborough as his predecessor.

America?—if Germany has not yet exerted her dangerous influence over the minds of those who are educating for the ministry, is there no ground to fear that Professor Stuart's* subtile commentaries have opened the way for a further advance towards Pelagian views, and that a writer who has been introduced amongst us, on high authority, as a sound teacher of the faith, has gained many converts, in this country, to opinions, which in his own are already strongly contested?—The temptation of mischievous learning is so much to be apprehended, that we must hope if the tempter should ever come with his deadly intellectual bribe, the guardians of youth will be on the watch, and repulse the enemy, though he assure them, “that they shall not die, but shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

Perhaps it would be premature to say, that the effects of continental learning are already discernible in some dissenting pulpits, but *something* is working there even now which is not for good. We hear now not unfrequently much, far too much, about “primary” and “secondary” meanings of passages in Scripture. The congregation is sometimes perplexed with a ten-minutes explanation of “the historical sense;” and portions of the word of God, which hitherto have, without question, been applied to Christ, are now ex-

* The following passage appears in the third edition of Professor Stuart's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans:—

“Another friend (having first mentioned Dr. Pye Smith), well known in this country, and also very dear to me, the Rev. Dr. Henderson, of Highbury College, in the precincts of London, who has also written a short prefatory commendation of the English edition of my Commentary, in a letter to me, dated June 24, 1833, has expressed his views in regard of my exegesis, of the passages in question, in the following manner: ‘Your view of the 7th chapter meets with my approbation. I deem it most important. The other view seems greatly calculated to keep up and foster a low state of Christianity.’”—p. 619.

plained as having "a primary" view to some Jewish king, priest, or prophet. A preacher will, perhaps, take the 16th Psalm, and, at some length, explain every word of it as said by David of himself, and shew how it agrees exactly with some parts of David's history,—then remembering how the inspired writers have taken a different view of the Psalm, will conclude with the Christian and spiritual interpretation; not much, in my opinion, to the edification of his hearers. It is like plunging the body first in snow, and then bringing it into the rays of the sun,—a very capricious and hazardous treatment of the human frame.

I might quote an instance, where one whose ministry I usually find profitable and instructive, lapsed once in my hearing into this learned mood, and at some length opened out "the primary meaning" of a well known prophetic passage, leaving a painful impression on my mind, which haunted me for some days; and if this effect is produced on one who is no stranger to expository subtleties, what must not the effect be on those who have hitherto read their Bibles in the old way, and who have never suspected that the guide post to Zion was a Janus with a double face?

The creed of some believers is as a tender root growing out of a dry ground, and cannot bear these visitations of blight on its timorous strength. It has need of a kinder and more refreshing treatment.

If I wished to enlarge the prayer "Lord increase our faith," it certainly would not be by petitioning for an increase of this sort of preaching which I have here noticed.

LETTER XII.

AN unnatural taste is soon acquired, and, after a short apprenticeship, the most abstinent persons may become the willing slaves of intoxicating liquors or narcotic drugs. Nothing surely ought to be less palatable to a Christian, than an exhibition of metaphysics, philosophy, and school-learning in the pulpit; but, alas! in some dissenting churches, or at least amongst the leading members of some dissenting churches, there is a raging appetite for this pernicious pharmacy. This appetite is generally known as a "demand for talent," a demand which is unquestionably greater than the supply, though the supply is not scanty.

The incitements to this demand are various.

1st. The semi-sacerdotal character of the dissenting ministers, constantly brings them into comparison with the priests of the dominant sect; they compare themselves with their antagonists, and their people are equally ready to make the same comparison. The clergy boast, with very loud trumpets, that they are learned men, and endowed with rare abilities; and sixteen thousand priests, all blowing the trumpet in unison, cannot fail to fill the length and breadth of the land with a most audible din. Now, as a dissenting minister seems to be the metempsychosis of a parish priest, it is quite in keeping with this gentle transformation, that he should endeavour to appear at least on a

par with *the old form*; a butterfly is naturally expected to be more brilliant than the chrysalis. The dissenting minister knows that the people expect "talent" from him, and he himself wishes to gratify them. Hence that odious saying, at least it grates most odiously on my ears, "Mr. A., of such a chapel, is a very clever young man,"—"Mr. B. is a man of talent,"—or "there is much talent, much information in Mr. C.'s sermons." Remarks like these were never heard in the apostolic age.

2d. The dominant sect is pleased to assert that dissent prevails only amongst the middling and lowest classes of society,—that the religion of nonconformists is not for ladies and gentlemen, and that where intellectual culture prevails, dissent must fade and fall away. There is some truth, perhaps, in the assertion, that dissent prevails *actually* in the middle classes of society; but it is a glaring error to take for granted that ladies and gentlemen of the aristocracy are remarkable for much information or intellectual culture, or that dissent has any inherent qualities which render the climate of plebian ignorance a necessary condition for its health and vigour. The church of England offers a very facile religion for power, wealth, and fashion; it is as easy to adopt its creed as it is to pass through a church door; we need not, therefore, be surprised to find it attracting all the power and fashion of this world; but there is nothing in dissent to render it distasteful to cultivated minds, nor is there any disposition amongst dissenters to encourage ignorance in any department where knowledge can possibly be attained; on the contrary, the danger appears threatening in the opposite direction,—the danger of calling in the power of this world's wisdom to sit on the throne with Christ, and to say to the work of men's hands, "these are our gods." I would not venture to predict that the congregational churches are ever to be the windows to which

English ladies and gentlemen will flock as doves, even in an extreme commotion of society,—a commotion which I believe is at hand,—but I think it far from improbable, that if some vigorous stand is not made by influential dissenters against the fashionable error of the age and sect, “the poor amongst men” will betake themselves to religious domiciles, better suited to their feelings, than those ambitious fraternities with which some of them are at present united.

3d. Within the last twenty years there have arisen several dissenting ministers of eminent talents, and some such there are at present on the stage. They are in the eyes of the congregations as “the chief priests,” and students at the academies look up to them as stars of the first magnitude. These are the ministers selected to give impression at ordinations, particularly in the neighbourhood of London; their ordination charges are generally very striking, sometimes very brilliant discourses, urging on the young ordained ministers a close attention to his studies,* and an unremitting endeavour to place himself, by his attainments and varied knowledge, in an exalted situation in the opinion of the people; ignorance is put under the ban with heavy anathemas, and the nascent pastor is solemnly warned of the vast peril of appearing deficient in talent, or at least in wide-extended information.

4th. The course of education pursued in the dissenting academies is, of course, to be taken into the account.

* “Science and literature are now so widely diffused, even over the middling classes, that no small measure of information is requisite to enable a minister to converse with his own flock; *unless, therefore, you intend to devote eight hours a day to your studies*, I have no strong expectation that you will long retain this pulpit. To secure such a portion of time as this, it will be necessary to guard against that temptation to neglect the study, with which a ministerial station in this mighty city must ever be attended.”

Pastoral Charge at an Ordination, by a living dissenting minister.”—P. 39.

5th. The solid rewards of "talent," that is, the profitable pastoral locations, in divers parts of the kingdom, may be also reckoned amongst the efficient causes.

The demand for talent being thus generated, the effects produced by the demand are greatly to be deplored. The church, through its instrumentality, is elevated indeed on a pedestal, to be admired by the world and to be praised of men; but a passionate idolatry of human excellence tinges at first the language, and ultimately the theology of ministers; the eyes of the people are turned from "the foolishness of preaching which saveth them that believe," to gaze at the achievements of penetrating and comprehensive intellects; humility is seen more in the charms of description, than in the reality of practise, and the graces of the gospel are drained through the alembic of human wit, till they come forth in the æry sublimations of "mental phænomena"—the volatile Hermes of the psychological science. Some who are advocates for talent, which, in the sense accepted amongst dissenters, means either eloquence, or metaphysical ratiocination, or learning*, or information; in short, any thing that places the minister on an imaginary emi-

* Luther has left a most valuable testimony against learned and high-flown preaching.

"A preacher," said he, "that intendeth to please the world should be thus qualified; first, he must be *learned*; secondly, he must have a fine deliverance; thirdly, he must have neat and quaint words; fourthly, he must be a *proper person*, whom women and maids may love; fifthly, he must not take but give money; sixthly, he must preach such things as people willingly hear.—When I am in the pulpit, then I resolve to preach only to men and maid-servants, I would not make a step into the pulpit for the sakes of Philip Melancthon, Justus Jonas, or the whole university; for they are already well seen in Scripture; but when preachers will direct their sermons to the high, learned, and deep understandings, and will breath out altogether Rabinos and master pieces, then the poor unlearned people present *do stand like a flock of kine.*"

nence above ordinary preachers, urge their views by loudly disclaiming against those teachers who are all for "comfort," and never feed their flock with "information," as if a preacher had but two courses to take—to nourish his hearers with the comforts of the gospel, or else to shew that he is a man of learning, curious research, or logical acumen! The latter, indeed, might be neglected and never missed, but woe to that herald of the gospel who omits the former and does not speak "comfortably to Jerusalem,"—woe to that man who, having undertaken to preach the grace of God through Christ, tells men only of the righteousness of the law or of human opinions! The province of evangelical preaching is, indeed, wide, and allows a vast range of rebuke, reproof, and exhortation; but he who, on system, shall omit the comforts, which are the portion of the elect, cannot be a disciple of the promised Paraclete. (Acts ix. 31.)

It may be laid down as an undoubted truth, that wherever a display of intellect is required in the Christian ministry, there there must be "high conceits engendering pride." The mind of him that is on the look out for talent in the pulpit is far above its proper level; such a one is not as he was at first, when he cried out of the depths; then he was abased and prostrate at the foot of the cross; then his language was, "O thou son of David, have mercy upon me;" then in a most black and uncomfortable darkness of soul his sorrows were heavy, and the unsearchable riches of Christ seemed out of his reach, and the trumpets on Mount Sinai were loud and dreadful, so that when the messengers came at last with glad tidings of peace to his soul, their very feet were beautiful to him, and there was nothing so sweet to him in all the world as the full exposition of the grace, the salvation, the freeness, the love, the unmerited redemption that is in Christ Jesus, justifying

the ungodly as they cease to seek salvation by good works, and accept it in faith without any merit of their own. What, then, has changed the heart of him who cries out for talent in the pulpit? What does that man possess as a Christian that he did not receive?—is it not all of grace? and has he not need every hour of the right hand of righteousness? Can he, unless he be an apostate from the faith, have any other prayer than this, as far as his spiritual life is concerned, “deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word?”

It was so at the beginning and it must be so still: there is nothing in Scripture leading us to expect that at any time, in any age, or in any æra, the mind of man should be so changed, his intellect so vastly exalted, his affections so purified, his fleshly nature so beatified, as that a new mode of preaching would supersede the old method adopted by the apostles. Humility will be required of us till the day of judgment; salvation by grace will never cease; it never will be an obsolete doctrine, “that unless a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven,” and as long as we see through a glass darkly, we must as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby.

The present mode of preaching which, I do not say, *prevails*, but which is far from uncommon, is a forgetfulness of the doctrines of grace, a silence—an awful silence, on the glory of Christ. This is the great fault, or, rather, the great sin, in the churches; and it is not to be wondered at, for where the head is possessed with the excellence and power of talent, the heart becomes blind to the beauty and power of Immanuel. There are some preachers who seem to think that they are, in an evil sense, so much “the lights of the world” as to forget that there is a greater than themselves in the

universe so struck with the splendour of their own abilities as to turn their backs on the Sun of Righteousness, the only life-giving light in Israel. It is a melancholy truth to publish to the world, that there are chapels where the preaching of the cross is practically considered a foolishness, and is superseded by "the enticing words of man's wisdom," to the great grief and pain of those pious Christians, who seem to themselves banished into outer darkness, when they may not behold the radiance of the Saviour's countenance. How often have I heard complaints to this effect, from persons of deep and solid piety, who are doomed to hear the cold and profitless ministry of eloquent discourses, expatiating on any thing but that which is of benefit to the spiritual life! How many chapels might I not indicate by name, where the dismal error of the age has emptied the seats of hearers, or cast a spiritual torpor on all who remain?

It has been my lot to hear orthodox nonconformists deliver sermons, such as I should have supposed could have been heard only in Socinian chapels; for though they did not attack *the foundations*, nor assert any thing contrary to sound faith, yet so entirely did they omit the gospel, or any allusion to any one of its doctrines, that a Mahommedan or a Jew might have listened with pleasure to the whole discourse, without wincing at one word, except the formulary at the end. The language was excellent, the thoughts were vigorous, the delivery animated, the action just and graceful, the manner energetic and decorously impassioned, forming a *tout ensemble* which commanded attention and secured unabated interest; but, alas! not one word was uttered by which one could guess that the preacher was of the Christian persuasion. The discourse, on one particular occasion, was on prayer; and yet, in a long sermon on this vital subject, every thing

was said almost that could be said excepting the truths revealed in the gospel,—the throne of grace,—the great High Priest,—the only approach to God through his righteousness and intercession,—and the angel to whom has been given “much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne!” All this was passed by,—the celebrated preacher was discoursing of the god of nature, the god of the natural man, “Jehovah, Jove, or Lord,” and a Guru from the banks of the Ganges, or a Mullah from the mosque of Mecca might have said “Amen” to this Christian sermon!

O Dame Hewley! it was not such preachers as these that thou didst mean by those much litigated words, “the poor and godly ministers of Christ’s holy gospel.”

What, it may be asked, is the cause of such a phenomenon? Certainly not a secret Socinianism, for the preacher’s creed is beyond suspicion,—no. We must explain it by remembering the temptation of talent, which cannot enter the heart without its accompanying train of lofty and ambitious views, which changes the pensioner of grace into a man of power, and transforms the docile pupil of the wisdom that is from above into the self-sufficient dispenser of intellectual riches. He that has gained applause by these means will not readily renounce his laurels, though they are more befitting the brows of a Greek sophist or a Florentine academician, than of a follower of Him whose only earthly crown was made of piercing thorns.

These sins of the pulpit prevail chiefly amongst the philosophizing school, which is only one degree less dangerous than the school of the rationalists. Rationalism creates, by anticipation, a rational religion, and then forces the facts of revelation into harmony with a preconceived plan. The rationalists and the neologists

view the Bible as a book of venerable fables, which they are at perfect liberty to submit to any treatment which may suit their purposes. The philosophizing preachers are sound in their creed abstractedly, but the creed and the text are often with them but as airs to the composers of music: the air is very well to start with, but the *variations* are every thing. The philosophizers seem to think that there are two classes of people for their ministry, "the people," and "the thinkers,"—the superior and the inferior minds; and that it is indispensable to furnish ambrosia to the one, whilst husks are quite sufficient for the other. But some preachers have become so elated with their success in the ambrosia treatment, that they are quite unable to preach a plain gospel sermon, and even to a degree that makes themselves perceive and lament the inconvenience. The balloon of talent has taken them up too high, and they cannot come down again to the gospel level;—there may be a vast deal of brilliancy in their ministry, but it is not like the rays of the sun; they cannot make it pass from a rarer into a denser medium.

This elated school teaches to this effect, "that the popular view of the gospel is best adapted to the people; but profound minds, from which the popular view is not hidden, and who are supported by it as well as the multitude, find, in the contemplation of points of view less generally perceived, an additional conviction, which yields an intellectual delight, a spiritual (metaphysical) repast, which is perhaps necessary to them, and which may appropriately be styled strong meat. This food being adapted only to their particular constitution, is not relished by the multitude, it is suited only to the cultivated intellects. With the people generally they unite in *the common forms of expression*, which for them are equally true and respectable: in short, in the language of Pascal,

‘there must be thoughts in reserve, though we speak in other respects like the multitude.’ ”

This is their theory: it is not part of my plan to confute it in this place; I will therefore only observe, that all religions invented by men have indeed had their hieroglyphic doctrines, but the gospel is the voice of Him that came from above, and is above all.

LETTER XIII.

IN America, where it seems to be taken for granted, in the congregational and presbyterian societies, that a learned ministry is essential to the edification of the church of Christ, they spare no pains to put in action this supposed lever of the gospel; "and so zealously are her youth engaged," says the *Congregational Magazine*, "in seconding these mighty efforts, that their ardour needs to be repressed rather than stimulated; they are literally falling victims to their excessive application to their studies."* This extraordinary information is corroborated by Messrs. Reed and Matheson, the late deputies of the English churches to America, who attest that hundreds of young men have broken themselves down in the fine flower of "a noble vigour," in preparing with too great ardour for the Gospel ministry, in the United States. How strange a position of circumstances is this! the ministers of the gospel, not dying as martyrs to the faith, not perishing at the stake or the scaffold, not pining in chains and dungeons as of yore, not worn out with extreme labours and perils, such as the apostle Paul describes, but dying "by hundreds" under the pressure of study, sinking under lexicons and grammars, languishing under dialects, and falling a sacrifice to

* Cong. Mag. cxxxiii., p. 33.

the lecture-room and the professor's chair! Surely all things must be turned upside down to have wrought this change; for, whereas, of old Paul desired the church to witness how "that not many wise men after the flesh were called," now it seems to be the glory of the churches that the foolish things should be despised, and the wise exalted. In the apostolical age, the Greeks used to seek after wisdom, and were disgusted that the gospel heralds preached only Christ as the wisdom from above, "because the foolishness of God" was in those days "wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men;" but if the Greeks in this our generation were to come and seek for wisdom, we may presume that they would find it, in all its glory, in the theological seminaries of America and Germany, and by no means in a despicable condition in the halls of Highbury and Homerton. "The foolishness of men" is not the stumbling-block before the door of the sheepfold in these days.

It may, perhaps, be interesting to behold the apparatus of theological discipline in the German universities, a discipline indispensable for the ministerial office in Prussia, and in some of the German principalities; unless, indeed, "an enthusiast" should venture to preach without leave obtained from the sovereign, and without the official diploma of his university; in which case he would infallibly be thrown into prison, and feel the smart of that rod with which a military and royal high-priest compels orthodoxy to wear the regimentals of the state.

In the German universities* the students of theology are required to make further progress in the study of philosophy, and the philosophy of religion. In addition, therefore, to theology, the student must attend

* See the *Biblical Repository*, edited by "Professor Robinson of the Andover Theological Seminary" p. ii.

lectures on logic, metaphysics, ethics, or moral philosophy, and the philosophy of religion, by which last is understood “the philosophical exhibition of the eternal and universal ideas which lie at the foundation of every particular religion, and the examination of the religious tendencies and propensities of our nature.” But farther still, the students are *invited* to attend lectures on the classics, history, and the natural sciences.

The course of lectures necessary to be heard in order to sustain future examination is, 1. propædeutical, or *introductory*; 2. theoretical; 3. practical. The propædeutical are divided into (1) *hodegetik*, (or leading-the-way-lectures), which teaches the subdivision of the science into different departments or disciplines, and the character of each of these, and of the relation which each particular discipline bears to the whole.; (2.) *methodik*, or the proper method of study—shewing the necessary qualifications in those who devote themselves to the study of a science, and to point out the hindrances which lie in their path; (3.) to shew in what particular way the different branches or department of the science may best be studied: and this is shewn from the nature of the science itself. (4.) *hermeneutic*, which, in order to understand in their full force and extent the truth of the Bible, undertakes to teach the character and condition of each of the sacred books—the peculiar circumstances and characteristics which serve in any way to throw a light upon, and affect their particular interpretation.

The *theoretical* lectures are those on the exegesis of the Old and New Testament, and archæology of the Scriptures; systematic and symbolic theology, and ethics; the history of doctrines, ecclesiastical history and antiquities.

The *practical*, comprises pastoral theology, or the proper mode of exercising the pastoral office; *kate-*

chetik, or the method of imparting religious instruction to children as by catechisms ; *homeletik*, or the art of preaching ; *liturgik*, or the mode of conducting public worship.

All these departments are taught scientifically and theoretically ; and through all this intricate labyrinth of instruction must the student of divinity wind his weary way, before he can emerge an authorized minister of the gospel.

The following is a *lectionsblatt*, or list of lectures for theological students, delivered in the university of Halle for the summer of 1830 :—

THEOLOGY.

“ Theological Encyclopædia, or Methodology, by *Niemeyer* ;—Encyclopædia and Theological Literature, by *Guerike* ;—Hermeneutics, by *Weber* and *Memeyer*.

“ Biblical Archæology of the Old and New Testament, *Gesenius* ;—Historical and Critical Introduction to the Old Testament, *Guerike* ;—the first chapter of Genesis, *Strange* ;—Job, *Wahl* ;—the Psalms, grammatically, *Schott* ;—Isaiah, *Gesenius* ;—Minor Prophets, *Rodiger* ;—Prophecies respecting the Messiah, *Fritzsche* ;—Historical and Critical Introduction to the New Testament, *Ullmann* ;—Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John, *Tholuk* ; the same Gospels *Wegscheider* ;—Epistles to Timothy, Titus, Romans, and Hebrews, *Thilo* ;—History of Christ’s Passion and Resurrection,* *Tholuk* and *Wegscheider*.

“ General History of Doctrines, *Wegscheider* and *Ullmann* ;—Systematic Theology, *Weber* ;—the same in

* “ I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.”—(Phil. iii. 10.)

connexion with the history of particular doctrines, *Wegscheider*;—the symbolical books of the Evangelical churches, beginning with the Augsburg Confession, *Guerike*.

“General History of Religion and the Church, to the Time of Gregory VII., *Thilo*;—the same from Gregory VII., *Thilo*;—the same from Gregory VII. to the present time, *Guerike*;—Lives and Writings of the Apostolical Fathers, *Ullmann*;—History of the Reformation, *Lorentz*.

“Practical Theology, *Franke*:—Homeletiks and their History, *Marks*;—Preaching of distinguished Pulpit Orators of our own and other times, *Wagnitz*—Catechetics, *Wagnitz and Franke*; Catechetical Exercises, *Weber*;—Popular Dogmatiks, *Fritzsche!!!*”

Thus it is that the apostles, sent forth by men, are prepared to do the work of evangelists! and thus is the gospel ministry cut up and thrown into Medea's cauldron, to come forth a new creature of magical power, and to perform prodigies, amongst mankind! need not be surprised that the fiery-flying serpents of neology and rationalism have been generated in abundance by the *lectionsblatts* of the German universities.

To what extent they have carried the machinery of theological and ministerial preparation in America,* I

* They that wish to become acquainted with the real state of the manners and morals of an American university should peruse the 19th chapter of Mr. Abdy's “Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States.” It is in vain to look for the truth on this subject, in the complimentary volumes of the two deputations.

Drs. Cox and Hoby have, at the end of their volume, given statistical tables of population and education; and in one of these tables, we learn the following curious facts of some of the

know not; but it can not surely be far behind the doings in Germany, if we are to credit the statements already quoted in this letter.

In the English dissenting academies they have not established anything approaching to the severity and intricacy of the German discipline. The theological lectures are, as might be expected, from the high characters of the tutors, valuable and instructive; but it would require a regiment of tutors and professors to place Highbury and Homerton on an equality with the university of Halle. The classical education which keeps pace with theological instruction in the English dissenting academies, includes, according to the established custom, Greek plays, and the et-cætera of the classical course; and thus is much valuable time lost, in obedience to the fashionable demand, for what is called "a complete education."

Granting that learning is requisite or tolerable in the present imperfect state of things, I would venture to suggest that a thorough acquaintance with Greek and Latin prose might be quite sufficient; and that if the students were taught to write Latin prose, with facility and elegance, and to translate Greek prose without hesitation, they would have acquired that which ought to satisfy the most zealous directors of the colleges. The composition of Latin prose used once to be considered indispensable in every one who had

American universities. The university of Burlington has no president, no tutors, no students, and no books; the university of Alton is in the same condition; the university of Eaton has no president, no tutors, no books, but *ten students!* happy decemviri! the university of Haddington is precisely in the same condition; and the university of New Hampton has a president, two tutors, one thousand books, but no students; the colleges of Oberlin and Willoughby have twelve tutors and professors, but no students.

any claims to be reputed a scholar, though it is an art now almost unknown amongst the gentlemen educated at the two great universities. Mathematics have been lately introduced at Highbury; but might well be renounced to make way for instruction in the French or Italian languages, and to give more opportunity to the study of general history, one of the most valuable sources of moral information, but, at present, grievously neglected in the education of youth. A well-directed course of history, from the days of Augustus to the Reformation—from the Reformation to the French Revolution—would be of incomparably greater value than some half-dozen of the usual embellishments of education, on which the opening mind of man is made to waste its energies in this land of traditions and idols.

LETTER XIV.

I HASTEN now to give some proof of the undue sway which talent, at present, exercises over the religious world: proofs in abundance might be adduced from publications of well-known individuals; but as that might be considered an unfriendly source of illustration, I turn to the *Evangelical Magazine*, which, as it is invested with the character of a reviewer, may, itself, most fairly be reviewed. Moreover, this periodical has been so long established, and is so widely circulated, that its sentiments may safely be taken as the most authentic expression of the religious feeling of the day. To its pages, therefore, I turn, and shall first notice a review of Mr. H——'s sermons, which appeared in one of its numbers some time back; premising, however, that it would be most unfair to consider that gentleman accountable for any strange expressions which an exaggerated admiration of his style may have elicited. Thus speaks the reviewer, in the zeal of his eulogy: "In our universities, in our dissenting colleges, there were rising many who felt—powerfully felt—that the people ought to gather round it every faculty of mind, every power of imagination; that it must subordinate itself to the knowledge that can instruct, and the eloquence that can charm, both consecrated and devoted to its high and glorious objects. With these examples before them, *they went forth*. They have lived to contemplate a

new era in the church," &c. This is stating the ambitious designs and vain conceits of the talent-school, without disguise; but if it be true, as the reviewer says, that "the pulpit *must* have the eloquence that can charm," &c., then what becomes of those pious, simple, and humble men who answer to none of these desiderata? I presume they must retire, and leave the field to more grand and gaudy orators, who, as the reviewer aptly expresses it, "went forth" from the halls of erudition, with all the pomp of a brilliant movement, to take the world captive with the magnificence of their achievements. The reviewer thus proceeds: "Fine abstractions, subtle reasonings, and lofty conceptions, as they belong to the regions of pure intellect, can only be bodied forth in a style which they create for themselves, and which is in nearest alliance with their peculiar nature; and we are persuaded that, in nine cases out of ten, the latter is censured because the former is not understood. The style is involved and obscure to those who have not the capacity to comprehend the idea it naturally conveys, and very probably in the simplest manner." Here the theory of talent has made some advances; for not only is the minister extolled for his "fine abstractions, subtle reasonings, and lofty conceptions," but a congregation devoid of such noble qualifications is scorned and insulted; and it is represented as something more than a misfortune, not to be able to follow the great man through those regions of "pure intellect" into which his superior faculties have enabled him to soar. So that we have come to this point at last, that not only the preachers, but the hearers of the Gospel ought to be men of refined and cultivated intellect, lest the valuable seed, scattered by the metaphysical sower, should fall into thankless and unfruitful soil! The Scriptures do, indeed, talk of a preparation of the soil, but for other purposes than

those contemplated by the reviewer, "sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy, break up your fallow-ground, for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you."

I pass over all the fustian of the review in its personal compliments to the minister, whose sermons called forth that ill-advised critique, for such topics are not within the compass of my remarks; but when we hear preachers of the gospel proclaimed, in an evangelical review, as "stars* of the first magnitude—inimitable—*sui generis*," &c., we need not be much at a loss to find a stone wherewith to crush such nonsense. It is at hand, "that ye might learn in us, not to think of men above that which is written, that none of you be puffed up one against another;" "what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it."

In the same magazine, but in a later number, we have kindred sentiments again avowed, though with more sobriety of language: the reviewer is noticing a new publication of some of Jeremy Taylor's works, of which he thus speaks:—"We have never been of the number of those who admired the theology of Jeremy Taylor; it is crude, conjectural, and not in a few places unscriptural. We are not aware that on a single difficult point in religious controversy, he is to be regarded as a safe guide. He was too imaginative on the one hand, and too dogmatical on the other, ever to attain anything like a sober and well-digested

* The fancy of representing the celebrity of our fellow-creatures, in the metaphor of a star, originated, I believe, with the stage-players; at least the great mimes of the day are called "stars," in the language of the stage: but when this metaphor is adopted by Christians, it brings to our recollection "the star wormwood which fell into the waters, and made men die of its bitterness."

view of the Christian scheme. He blundered, *in limine*, on the doctrine of original sin, and this error vitiated, to a lamentable degree, his entire theology. No well-grounded student of the doctrine of Paul, in the first four chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, can read six pages in Bishop Taylor's theological writings, without perceiving a leaven of pharisaic dependence, inconsistent alike with just views of the total depravity of our nature, and a simple entire acceptance through the righteousness of the great surety." (E. M. Dec. 1835, p.p. 5, 49.) All this is well, every word is just and sound; for it is quite true, even as Coleridge could discern, that Taylor's views do not differ essentially from the Socinian scheme: but how great must be our surprise, after so fair a proem of the reviewer to read this foul conclusion! "We are so conscious of the great value of Jeremy Taylor's writings, that we cannot but rejoice to see them in their present cheap and elegant form, and accompanied, as they are, with an elaborate and *highly talented* critique from the pen of our best writers."

The reviewer, therefore, rejoices that the works of a teacher, whose theology is "crude, conjectural, and highly unscriptural" have been published, in a cheap and elegant form—the cheapness for general dissemination—the elegance for the lovers of smart things; and yet, when so disseminated, the reviewer largely confesses that their author teaches false doctrine concerning original sin, and to such a degree, as "lamentably to infect his whole theology;" nay, he has not written "six pages" without contradicting the gospel as taught by Paul, and without manifesting "the leaven of the Pharisees" of which our Lord warned us to beware. In short, this bishop's works are against "acceptance through righteousness of the great surety." Could, then, Baronius, Bellarmine, the Tridentine fathers, the holy inquisition, or the man

of sin himself, have found a writer more exactly suited to their tastes than this same bishop, as pourtrayed by the reviewer? And yet he rejoices that his works are republished in a cheap and elegant form, and is conscious of their great value!

But the mystery soon explains itself, for the reviewer goes on to say, "the main value we attach to the works of Jeremy Taylor, is the noble and holy excitement which they are fitted to apply to the mind, *particularly those who are candidates for the work of the Christian ministry.*" Noble and holy excitement! such, it may be presumed, as animated the Pythian, when, inflated with Delphic gas, she poured forth extemporaneous verse to admiring Greece. For, surely, after all the reviewer had said, it cannot be the holiness of Christians. Any thing, however, that will make preachers cut a figure in the pulpit, from whatever quarter, is acceptable to those who are labouring under this raging thirst for talent.

Now, if sentiments like these occasionally make their appearance in the Evangelical Magazine, and are allowed to pass without animadversion from its numerous correspondents, who either are, or may be, the whole body of dissenting ministers, several evangelical members of the established church, and many Wesleyan Methodists, it is difficult to come to any other conclusion, than that such sentiments are at present in vogue, and that the reviewer is uttering with confidence the received opinions of the day; a fact not to be passed over without grave reflections on the inroads which the principles of this world have made on the simplicity of evangelical wisdom.

LETTER XV.

BAD taste and bad doctrine generally go hand in hand, I mean bad taste in rhetoric and in the composition of language; for bad doctrine is most friendly to refined taste in those elements which constitute the dominion of the senses. This is a remark which I am aware requires historical and moral proof; but the limits of these letters compel me to withhold the proof at present, and to content myself with stating this proposition, that where the evangelical institutes are perverted, weakened, denied, forgotten, or superseded, there we may reasonably expect to find a bad taste prevailing in the language of the churches; and *vice versa* the proposition will be found also to be true.

Having, therefore, attentively considered all that has gone before, it might be expected that we should discover the pulpit of our age manifesting a corrupt taste both in language and sentiment. And this *is* the case, and will be so acknowledged perhaps by another generation, when the language of truth, of nature, and of the gospel shall have silenced, with its majestic simplicity, the worthless jinglings of our popular oratory. But it is not merely in style, but in the region of thought and sentiment, that bad taste prevails; for it would be an easy, though an ungracious task, to select from various religious publications, which have issued from the press within the last twenty years, specimens of the worst taste in composition,—specimens of the

grossest inaptitude of words to the subject, the vices of a metaphysical abstruseness, conceited phraseology, suspicious sentimentality, or redundant and misplaced ornament. Sometimes the authors are so carried away with zeal for pretty sentences, that they lapse unconsciously into false doctrine, and by a lavish use of metaphorical embellishments, utter expressions which could scarcely be reconciled with the Assembly's Catechism, or any received standard of orthodoxy. Sometimes a dashing allusion to a discovery of science betrays them into a momentary neology,* and sometimes a bright idea tempts them to do violence to a text of Scripture, and wrest its meaning into a curious quaintness.

But the error of taste, observable in some religious teachers, is not confined to their sermons or writings; it extends even to *the manner* with which they deliver their set orations from the pulpit or platform. This manner sometimes partakes (let the truth be spoken) of gross conceit or ridiculous affectation. At least, on particular occasions, when they are expected to create an effect, some individuals throw into their general demeanour an air of finery, simulated pathos, or exaggerated feeling, which, by a calm and clear-sighted spectator, cannot possibly be set down to any thing but *acting*, and acting, too, on a stage where not so much as a fictitious thought should be tolerated. I much suspect that in the minds of many of the auditors there is a tacit unexpressed feeling, when such exhibitions are going on, that the admired and popular orator is performing his part very well, but still that it is a part,—a scene in a tragedy, got up for an occasion; so difficult is it to give to sentimentality or artificial emotion,

* It is not to be supposed that I am heaping together criminations without proofs to substantiate them; those proofs are now before me, but it is not necessary to publish them.

whether expressed by words, gesture, or looks, the appearance and force of truth, in the cool and perhaps severe judgment of an English audience.

An occasion once offered itself for some evangelical members of the established church to attend a public meeting of dissenters in their neighbourhood. By my advice they went to the meeting; for it was my wish that some unreasonable prejudices should be removed, by their hearing the admired orators of a sect of which they knew little but by misrepresentation. They were persons on whose judgment and right feelings I could rely with confidence. The effect produced on their minds, by what they heard and saw, was unfavourable; they freely acknowledged that the speakers had a happy command of flowing oratory, and were evidently endowed with no mean abilities; "but," said they, "there was several times such an air of conceit and finery in their manner; and they said some things of themselves or their friends, with such evident intention to produce a particular effect, that we felt as if we were listening to actors in a theatre."

What a lesson might this be to the advocates of the rhetorical art, in whatever way exercised! But who shall teach this lesson to minds seeking the applause of a school, nurtured in an artificial discipline, and ignorant or incredulous of the powers of truth's irresistible eloquence?

But there are writers who seem to commend, *ex cathedra*, "skilful management," both of matter and manner, to the occupants of the pulpit; for what can be the meaning of the following passage? "Whatever the mode of address, or whatever the choice of topics, there are two qualities inseparable from religious instruction, these are *seriousness* and *affection*. In the most awful denunciations of the divine displeasure, an air of unaffected tenderness should be preserved,—that, while with unsparing fidelity we declare the whole

counsel of God, it may appear we are actuated by a genuine spirit of compassion. A hard and unfeeling manner of denouncing the threatenings of the word of God, is not only barbarous and inhuman, but calculated, by inspiring disgust, to rob them of all their efficacy. If the awful part of our message, which may be styled the burden of the Lord, ever fall with due weight on our hearers, *it will be when it is delivered with a trembling hand and faltering lips*, and we may then expect them to realize its import, *when they perceive that we ourselves are ready to sink under it.*"*—Is not this a distinct commendation of the theatrical art? and does it not prove that we are far indeed removed from the primitive ideas and practices?

In simplicity of style and in good taste, the evangelical clergy excel the dissenting ministers, though in the oratorical art itself they come far behind them. The clergy, with a few exceptions, do not impress their hearers with an idea of their abilities, and are more to be admired for their zeal and sincerity, than for their powers of suasion at public meetings; but in the pulpit they are not unfrequently efficacious preachers, and, for the most part, are free from the vices of *bad taste*. Some of the evangelical clergy I could name, who, though their preaching has been long and worthily esteemed, have never once, perhaps, in all their ministerial career, employed a studied figure of speech, or made use of an illustration, or addressed the imagina-

* "On the discouragements and supports of the Christian ministry." By Robert Hall.

"Compared with names like these," says another modern teacher of great repute, "how poor were the subjects of ancient oratory! and such is their force, such the freshness of their power (descriptions of the day of judgment), that though a thousand times presented to the imagination, they may yet again, *whenever skilfully managed, command breathless attention*, while the sands of the preacher's hour are running low."—*Natural History of Enthusiasm*.

tion with a single embellishment of rhetoric. Their preaching is a plain, unornamented style of serious *talking*; and yet, by this talking—by this pious conversation from the pulpit, how deep a hold have they established on the affections of their hearers,—how vastly is their ministry preferred to the unquestionably superior discourses,—superior in language and management,—in the neighbouring dissenting chapel, where “talent” perhaps is “wasting its sweetness on the *desert air*!”

It is, however, extremely difficult, perhaps hopeless, to secure acknowledgment to the full force of these truths from one who has thought that his great strength is in his abilities, and that “a man of talent” is sure to fill a chapel. All that he has seen and heard amongst his associates, in his academical and pastoral days, has contributed to strengthen his delusion; and to make him think, that as knowledge is power in the world, so is talent power in the gospel. With such a theory it is impossible altogether to exclude the theatrical art from the pulpit, for he that is managing his abilities to produce effect, will naturally adopt these subsidiary practices, which invest oratory with power in the forum or the senate: and, perhaps, all may be extremely well managed according to rule, and the discourses, as well as the mode of delivery, may be exactly after the model of academical perfection; and yet all this apparatus is useless, and produces little effect! Hence, some who are conscious of their superior qualifications, who know that they are in possession of an ample store of information, and a facile flow of speech, are surprised, and sometimes offended, to find all these precious commodities disregarded, whilst others, who have none of their excellencies, command attention, and are eminently successful in the ministry. It leads them to suppose that the people have no discernment,—that they are a herd of ignorant, illiterate, and vulgar-

mindful fools,—that it is in vain to cast away valuable seed on such a thankless and barren soil, and that a pastor, who has been so slighted, will but shew a proper respect to his office, by turning away in indignation from intellects which neither appreciate his instructions nor comprehend his superiority. I have known one minister, at least, under this false impression, hasten “to fresh fields and pastures new,” after having for some years in vain poured forth the far-fetched treasures of his study upon his bewildered congregations. The people rarely could understand the abstractions of the preacher, who rarely condescended to preach a plain gospel sermon; and thus, after a cold and fruitless union, the minister and the church separated; he despising his people, and they never mentioning his name but as of “a high gentleman.” Had this minister’s discernment not been clouded by the prevailing delusion, and had he studied the style and doctrine of the old writers, instead of daily feeding his mind with the labours of the “subtile and irrefragible doctors,” who, with all their deep thinking, never prove any thing, nor ever discover any available truth, the catastrophe might have been very different, and he might now have been the happy pastor of a large and affectionate flock.

Before this subject is finally dismissed, a word should be said on the influence which Robert Hall’s writings at present exercise on the dissenting body. The publication of his complete works, and the applause with which they have been greeted, in various quarters, has stimulated too many students of divinity to imitate his style, both in language and dialectick, and with feeble powers to reach, or at least to approach near, the eminence occupied by that brilliant disquisitionist. It is a vain and unprofitable effort, and wears out the wings of many an aspiring genius, in labours which, if applied in a proper direction, might produce some happy re-

sult. Robert Hall is entitled to praise in his proper place, but that place can hardly be within the precincts, though perhaps not far from the confines, of the church of Christ. It certainly would be improper to call him a divine, for divinity is not to be found in the pages of his elegant writings: he is an admirable reasoner, but his province was to overthrow the Deist, rather than to improve the Christian; and I suspect that another age will confess that he was too abstract for edification, and too pious for pure reason. If metaphysics could have added power and life to the quick and powerful word of God,—if logic could have sharpened that two-edged sword, which pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, it would have been effected by Robert Hall;* but he that gave us the truth in Christ knew, by his superior wisdom, that it was inexpedient to strengthen his word from the sources of metaphysical cognition, which he left to be explored by those who love to touch the short limits of the reasoning faculties, where they are soon stifled in the thin atmosphere of psychological analysis.

* There is a saying abroad, attributed to Robert Hall, that “voluminous Dr. Owen is a continent of mud,”—a scornful *bon mot*, which I have heard some of the modern school quote with high relish. We may safely appeal to time to confute the sneer; for I suspect that Owen’s works will never be laid aside, in spite of their uncouth style, unless, indeed, the son of perdition should again take possession of all the earth. “The continent” may indeed be alluvial, but it is on that account the more fruitful, and the soil which has made it, is brought down from the holy mountains by a river, whose fountain-head no eye of man has seen.

LETTER XVI.

THE question of comparative merit, between the congregational dissenters and the evangelical church people, is to be decided, according to the wishes of some persons, by an appeal to their comparative* piety; a mode of deciding the question which, in my opinion, is faulty and reprehensible; for not only does the state of absolute isolation of each dissenting church produce a vast moral variety in the whole body, so that what may be true of one society would be quite untrue of another; but the qualities of piety are such as to forbid our placing them in the scales, and pronouncing on their value. There are various sorts of piety,—of the Scribes and Pharisees,—of public worship,—of closet devotion,—of secret ascetism,—of spiritual meditation,—of superstitious will-worship,—of desponding melancholy,—of joyous hope,—of unseen alms deeds and works of love,—of open munificence in the cause of religion,—of trembling fear,—of dawning hope,—of all-enduring faith, of patience, and of love; and of these, though some belong to

* This comparison has been given in favour of the established church by Dr. Pye Smith. “I must profess my opinion that *the increase* of vital piety in the established church, within the last thirty or forty years, has been proportionably, and, comparing the measure of advantages, greater than among us.”

“Necessity of Religion to the well-being of a Nation,” a sermon, by John Pye Smith.—p. 42.

superstition or hypocrisy, yet they may not seem so to our eyes, and of the others, which are, indeed, acceptable to Omniscience, we may know nothing; it is, therefore, a safe, wise, and blessed command, "to judge nothing before the time, till the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God."

But it is quite lawful to state facts that have come under our observation, and to divulge truths, the knowledge of which may conduce to some good end. Now one of these facts is this, that the *true* evangelical church people seem fully alive to the danger, pollutions, and snares of the world, and the constant necessity of watching against its influence; that their warnings are often directed to this topic, and their practices regulated accordingly; whilst amongst the dissenters the vast importance of watchfulness against the chief enemy is slightly apprehended and feebly inculcated. This remark will not, however, apply to *all* who are usually classed under the denomination "evangelical;" because it is a painful truth that of that party, whether lay or clerical, there are many who are misplaced amongst serious Christians; for not only is the denomination so widely extended now, as to include any clergyman who merely preaches justification by faith, and assists the missionary cause; but all ladies and gentlemen who lend a helping hand to the machinery of the party, whether by purse or influence, are likewise set down as serious Christians, though their lives are plainly inconsistent with the self-denying profession of the cross. I therefore do not speak here of the glittering phalanx of metropolitan evangelicals, which occupies the high places at the May meetings, and which, after the speeches of the convocation, is disbanded for the evening route, or the avocations of aristocratical ambition; nor of the tempestu-

ous millenarians of the coronet; nor of the staff of shewy preachers, moving amidst the adulation of drawing-rooms and the incense of patrician admirers; nor of those dignitaries or pluralists, who, with a seraphic faith, calmly enjoy the profitable corruptions of their tainted church; nor of those busy ladies and gentlemen who, with the slang of doctrine on their lips, seem to think that they have a plenary indulgence to serve two masters. No; the works of these persons are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and charity is not wounded by seeing them struck out of the list: but I speak here of those who indeed are evangelical, in the best sense of the word, who have escaped the pollutions that are in the world by obeying the gospel, and to whom the gospel has come not only in word but in power, separating them entirely from that, which if a man loves, the love of the Father cannot be in him. (1 John ii. 15.)

Amongst such we may observe a vivid apprehension of the dangers of the world, and that, too, chiefly manifested by those who have taken refuge within the sanctuary from the patrician ranks of society. Neither is this a surprising phenomenon, for such persons, in their days of gaiety, were behind the scenes of fashionable life; they knew the secrets of its iniquity,—they saw the paint and the varnish of the actors,—they were familiar with the pulleys and the tricks of the shifting scenes, and feeling in their hearts that all on that stage were perpetually employed in the tragedy of practical atheism, they have placed themselves, in great alarm, as far as possible from the neighbourhood of this unmasked iniquity. There are also evangelical clergymen, who faithfully warn their flock of the danger of the world to believers, who know the sunk rocks and whirlpools in its fair and treacherous seas, and who advise its navigators to stop their ears, lest they should be captivated with the song of the Syrens. It is in

vain to give warnings of the “motions of sins working in the members,” and of the proclivity of the human heart to temptation, unless the greatest temptation of all is set forth in its true character, and repulsed from any lodgment in the mind, which false reasonings and treacherous affections too frequently offer it. The habitual inclination of the will is to follow the solicitations of the senses,—these solicitations are concentrated in the world; for whether the temptation be by worldly friendships, gain, pleasure, or applause, it will be found, on analysis, that the secret of the temptation is to draw off the mind from the *spiritual habit* to the life of the senses, to set the affections on things below and not on things above, to fix the eye on visible and temporal delusions, and to turn it away from invisible and eternal realities. Hence there is, in the well-known words of the apostle John, a rich storehouse of mental philosophy, though expressed in the concise language of an oracle, “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world:” and it would be well if the deep wisdom of this oracle occupied the attention of those preachers who love to “think deeply” in the pulpit, but who are constantly fathoming other profundities than these.

Now it so happens that I, who have heard but very few sermons of the evangelical clergy, but very many of the dissenting ministers, can report that the former frequently allude to this subject, and press it on their hearers with serious admonitions; whilst the latter, by some accident, have never, in my hearing at least, made it groundwork for those reproofs which the topic of “watchfulness” seems necessarily to include. In short, I never did but once, and that in a passing sentence of a weekly lecture, hear a dissenting minister preach on the danger of the world to believers. It is possible, but extremely improbable, that this might

be accidental; I therefore look to the solution of their silence to another theory, and believe that it is to be traced to the fact, that dissenting ministers are not aware *by experience* of the peril in which the church is placed, by its proximity to the world that lieth in wickedness. A dissenting minister has generally come forth from a pious dissenting family,—he has been sent in the opening dawn of manhood to a theological academy, where he has witnessed only gravity of manners, a pure morality, and the almost ascetic discipline of the religious life: the three or four years of his academical course have been spent in the study, or in rural itinerancy, or amongst students going forth from the cell to the pulpit; his friends and acquaintance are have been all accepted members of Christian churches, and his heart has, ever since he began to think seriously, been fully engaged in the movements of the religious society. What, then, can such a one know by experience of the world?—how can he be the pilot amongst the sandbanks of a dangerous stream which he has never navigated and knows only by description?

Moreover, it seems to be a general opinion amongst Christians, of the middling and lower classes, that the world is to be found only in regions far above their level,—that it is in “the west-end of the town,” amidst the gilded equipages and gay festivities of patrician parade—

“Where throngs of knights and barons bold
In weeds of peace high triumph hold;”

forgetting that there is “a world” amongst those who are in trade, and are accumulating money; or anywhere, in fact, where the means of power over that which will gratify the senses, are put into the hands of man. Thus they do not dread the waterfall till they are amazed by its thunder and the clouds of its commotion,

nor do they remember that their frail bark may be carried down by the rapids many miles distant from the last great leap.

But it is the world of trade, the world of wealth, the world of pride and of power, created by any circumstances, against which the voice of warning should be unsparingly raised. There are many dissenters wealthy and prosperous, and many more desire to be so with all their hearts,* and some there are who have adopted

* The following observations deserve serious attention; they are, indeed, the observations of an enemy, but, alas! are directed with precision to a vulnerable part. It is in vain to deny the truth of the accusations, which apply to some dissenters as well as to professedly serious members of the established church. "Of all the indications of a worldly spirit, none is so distinctly and emphatically denounced in Scripture as a love of riches—(here follow many texts)—do they serve to alarm that class of Christians who remonstrate with such morbid piety against popular amusements, or to check, under a sense of spiritual danger, their desire to increase their worldly means? Do the serious deny themselves the use of riches on account of their tendency to corrupt the human heart? We apprehend not. As far as we are enabled to discover, they testify no reluctance whatever to follow the footsteps of '*the worldly*' in the road to wealth. We look in vain for any distinguishing mark in this respect between the two classes of society,—that *which is of the world*, and that which is *not of the world*. All appear to be actuated by the common impulse,—to push their fortunes in life. All exhibit the same ardent, active, enterprising zeal in their respective pursuits. The mammon of unrighteousness seems to inspire none of the serious either with terror or aversion. Where the ordinary channels for procuring wealth are closed against them, they shew no disinclination to obtain it in other ways. It comes equally acceptable to them in the shape of a legacy, or of a dower with a companion for life. The love of money, which is the root of all evil—(mark the terrific epithet!)—is treated by them with an unaccountable degree of lenity and indulgence, considering their repugnance to worldly amusements; not a word escapes from them on the pernicious effects of wealth. Not a tract issues from their repositories to caution us against its pursuit; not a homily is heard from their pulpits on the solemn obligation to war against it. We see many of the serious rolling in handsome chariots, main-

a luxurious style of living, which it would be in vain to defend against the direct prohibitions of the New Testament. To enter into this subject minutely,—to treat of the ostentation of expensive furniture, the display of elaborate dinners, the glitter of costly habiliments, ever varying according to the rapid variations of fashion; and the gay conversation, ill-disguised with family worship at the conclusion of the feasts, with many other points of a kindred character, would be a long task,—I therefore only glance at these things, which will be well understood in certain quarters; and as there are some who have, unawares, found themselves in the vortex, and begin to doubt their situation, and others who are perfectly tranquil in the midst of their peril, I would to all such recommend them, when they next are in circumstances to inquire into the fitness and safety of their position, to ask themselves if they could in the midst of their worldly enjoyments, with a good conscience, make that profession which Paul has made for a justified Christian? Gal. ii. 20.

It is much to be apprehended, that the trial of the world ought at this present time to be felt most acutely by conscientious persons of the middling classes, for, as trade is principally in the hands of that class, it is with them that the difficulty of struggling

taining numerous servants, giving costly entertainments,—we see their carriages emblazoned with the same heraldic ornaments, their attendants clothed in the same gaudy liveries, their tables covered with the same luxurious viands, that are in ordinary use with the men of the world. These trappings of pride and vanity, and vain-glory, seem to find just as much favour in their eyes, as with other people. Rank and importance are discarded by none of the serious, as unfitting appendages of a spiritual life. Nay, they are sometimes sought after with an avidity that, to vulgar apprehension, seems strangely at variance with the lofty pretensions of such men," &c. &c. &c.

"Pretensions of the Evangelical Class."—*Edinburgh Review* No. cvii. p. 103.

with the unquestionably dishonest practices of the day must rest. We hear everywhere that trade is now conducted on new and dishonourable principles,—that the system of competition, underselling, and frontless rivalry, which, thirty years ago, was considered scandalously disreputable, is now become a general custom, and that those who are endeavouring to make their fortunes as tradesmen too often resort to tricks and artifices, which ought to bring the blush of shame on the cheek of honour; if this is really the case—and it is loudly proclaimed by those who have every opportunity of knowing the truth—how great must be the temptations with which some members of Christian churches are now environed! How painfully must they perceive that *they* have their “world” to contend with not less than the wealthy patrician and the exalted prince! Happy, then, is that Christian who, in providing for his family, knows that all his exertions are “with clean hands and a pure heart,” and who can depart in peace from this scene of temptations without having wounded his conscience by practices which are incompatible with *Christian* integrity.*

* A description of the Lollards, by the Romish Inquisitor Reinher, will shew that the Protestants of the age of Wickliff had their cross to bear in trade, not less than in the profession of the faith. “The disciples of Wickliff are men of a serious, modest deportment, avoiding all ostentation in dress, *mixing little with the busy world*, and complaining of the debauchery of mankind. They maintain themselves wholly by their own labour, and *utterly despise wealth, being fully content with bare necessities*. THEY FOLLOW NO TRAFFIC, BECAUSE IT IS ATTENDED WITH SO MUCH LYING, SWEARING, AND CHEATING. They are chaste and temperate, are never seen in taverns, or amused by the trifling gaieties of life. You find them always employed either learning or teaching.”

This could not be mistaken for a description of *modern* dissenters.

LETTER XVII.

IF a well-instructed physiologist were to lose his way in the pathless tracts of the earth, he would, nevertheless, be able to divine the climate and the country through which he was wandering, by attentively considering the productions of the soil, and the appearances of animal life surrounding him.

His knowledge of botany would instruct him that he had found his way, it might be, into the regions of the Brazilian empire; or his acquaintance with the animal kingdom would insure him that he was in the wildernesses of Southern Africa. Every climate has its peculiar productions, every country has its distinctive marks, by which it may be described and recognized. And so is it in the land of Emanuel; the delightful fruit found there, and no where else, is LOVE.—Christian love—love in Christ, the divine AGAPE of the word of God, the fruit of the Spirit, the evidence of the twice-born and redeemed people. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.” This is the mark of Christ’s people—this is their colour, the seal and token of their caste, the distinctive mark and clear sign of their tribe. A Christian might have lost his way in the world, he might be in a strange country, in a re-

gion of which he knows nothing; but he marks the inhabitants, he sees Agape in their demeanour, broadly stamped by the seal of the spirit; he observes that they love one another in the ineffable affection of evangelical unity, and now he knows that they are disciples and servants of his Lord; he recognizes his brethren, and he rejoices that he has found the sons and daughters of God, the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ.

And thus again, on the other side: if he were searching for God's family, and were to meet with many exterior marks of their society, yet, if he could discern no love amongst them, he would know that they could not possibly be the people of his inquiry; and why? simply because, as our Lord told us, that "by this should men know that Christians are his disciples, when they love one another;" so is it inevitably true, that when men find a people *not* loving one another, they must know that they are *not* his disciples. This is plain and clear for any understanding; men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles; every tree has its fruit; a disciple of Christ has his fruit—it is love—if, therefore, there is not love to be found in an individual, or an aggregate of individuals, that man or those men are certainly not Christians, whatever professions they may be pleased to make, or whatever name and title they may have appended to themselves, or to their society.

The evidence of the regeneration is "unfeigned love of the brethren" (1 Pet. i. 22.); it is the fruit of the incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever; it is a proof that a man has passed from death unto life, that he knows God, that God dwelleth in him, that God has instructed him*. The Scriptures set forth the love of God and of his children as inter-

* 1 John iii. 14; 1 John iv. 7; 1 John iv. 12; 1 Thess. iv. 9.

changeable evidences, which mutually prove one another, so that he who loves God in truth, loves his people, and he that loves his people in truth, loves God.* A church of Christians is known to be in the energy of its life when love to the saints is conspicuous (Eph. i. 15.), and it is the object of earnest prayer that this love should be on the increase (Phil. i. 9; 1 Thess. iii. 12); and amongst nine fruits of the spirit which the Apostle Paul enumerated as discernable in the peculiar people, he names love the first of them all. (Gal. v. 22.)

Moreover, it is evident that love is the greatest gift to the church; the richest of all the donations which the conqueror of death has to bestow on his servants: This, I say, is evident on comparing the doctrines of Scripture, — “When Christ ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, he gave gifts for men—and he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers, for the edifying of the body of Christ;” and yet we are elsewhere taught that all these great gifts are worth nothing at all without charity or love,—“though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.”

What then is the state of that church, where love is not? it is a mere *nothing*; it may make a noise, indeed, and a sound about religion, but it is the sounding of brass or of a tinkling cymbal; it may have all the ordinances, all the body of devotion, but there is no life in the body. To what purpose is the multitude of its sacrifices? let it bring no more vain oblations; for its incense is an abomination, and its worship is

* Compare 1 John v. 2 with 1 John iv. 20, 21.

sin; it has not opened its bosom to receive the chief gift of the victorious and enthroned Redeemer, and therefore stands before him wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

But let us pause awhile, to consider the elements of this evangelical Agape, for it is evident, from the words of our Lord, when he set it up as a perpetual mark of his kingdom, that it is of no vulgar and ordinary nature.—“ A NEW commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another, *as I have loved you.*” Now, unless it be something much more than sectarian friendship, a weed that plentifully luxuriated in the world before the incarnation of Jesus, the son of Mary, it cannot be called “new.” We may, therefore, easily declare what it is *not*; Christian Agape is not an affection for any man, or family, or society, because he or they belong to our sect; for if it were, then a Mahometan, who has a strong and even enthusiastic preference for one of his own creed and nation, in comparison with a Christian, “has passed from death unto life because he loves his brethren.” To love only one sect or party of Christians, which we may have heartily espoused as the only church or party, and not to love a Christian as a Christian, is counterfeit love; and so also to love only those Christians who are our kindred and relations, or have been in some manner our benefactors, cannot be a fulfilling of that “new” commandment which our Lord bequeathed us. The strength and novelty of the commandment consists in the similitude of Christian love to the love which Christ bears to his people,—“as I have loved you, that ye love one another,” with the same freedom from prejudice, and the same strength of affection. Our Lord loved the sadducees and pharisees, the priests and the lawyers, the Jews and the Samaritans, the circumcised and the uncircumcised, *who believed in his name*:—“as many as re-

ceived him, to them gave he power to become the son of God—ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” He did not consider at all their previous origin, their habits, kindred, or caste; he considered their faith and their reception of himself as their king, priest, and prophet; their redeemer, shepherd, and saviour,—this was and is his love for his people, and has been so from everlasting, and will be so to everlasting. He is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. The love of Christians must be, therefore, to Christians, like that of their master to themselves; they must not love in sects and divisions, in parties and denominations. Their business is to inquire into the faith of those who call themselves Christians. Has a man received Christ? has he embraced *his* righteousness by faith, and through that righteousness has he received the remission of sins? has he been sealed with the spirit of promise? does he rejoice in the Lord Jesus? has he taken up his cross? has he escaped, or is he escaping the pollutions of the world by the knowledge of Christ? has he given his heart to the Lord, and is his old nature dying daily under the reign and power of grace?—then that man is a Christian; and if I am a Christian, I am bound to love him as I love myself; to lay down my life for him, if need be; to offer him all my affections, and to do him every act of kindness and good will in my power.

We see, then, that if a churchman loves a churchman, because he belongs to his party, because he is no dissenter, because he admires the prayer-book and the prelacy, he is no better than a Mahometan; he is an utter stranger to the “new commandment:” or if a Wesleyan-methodist loves his brother methodists, because they are staunch soldiers of the conference;

or if a Baptist loves all Baptists in the union of adult immersion; or if a Quaker is attached to Quakers for their peculiarities—this is not Agape? it is not “the new commandment,” it is not the fruit of the Spirit; but is rather the old weed of the enemy, which he sowed long ago in the hearts of the Sadducees and Pharisees, and all the varied sects of heathen idolatry.

What, then, shall we report of Zion in these days, when we mark well her bulwarks, that we may tell it to the generation following? Shall we write it down, that the bond of union, like a wall of fire, is round the sacred enclosure, and that all men may know its holy citizens are disciples of Christ, because they love one another? Certainly, if we look at Christianity in its sects, if we take a view of it in its existing denominations, and do not single out true Christians, separating them altogether from the parties to which they belong, we have little to say of its lovely union, and beauteous harmony in this generation. I can find the disciples of Jesus Christ amongst the Episcopalians, Methodists, Independents, Baptists, and Quakers, who do indeed love the brethren wherever they find them, and who, with a tender and expansive spirit, embrace all those who have found deliverance in the great Preserver, and forgiveness of sin in the great Redeemer, and joy and peace in the great Surety, without asking questions about sect and party; but I have never yet found any sect, or heard of any which, viewed as a church of Christ, can be said to manifest the power of “the new commandment.”

And first of the church of England: this is the church of the nation, the puissant institution which, according to the assertion of its adherents, has conveyed *the Gospel* into every town and village in England: an assertion, which, for the present, we will let pass; but where is the Christian love amongst its members? where is “the communion of the saints?”

a communion which it proclaims unceasingly as a part of the Christian faith in its daily worship? all the members of the established church are, by the theory of the prayer-book, members of the church of Christ; they have been baptized and confirmed, and have a right to communicate at the Lord's Supper: the whole parish may communicate; the prayer-book commands that the parish shall come to the Lord's table three times every year at least; and we know that the communion has, till very lately, been a test of office, enjoined by act of parliament: how, then, in such a system, and such a church, is it possible that there can be the love of the brethren? The prayer-book assures us that all the baptized and confirmed parish is in a state of regeneration, and will inherit the kingdom of heaven. The whole parish, therefore, is to a churchman the family of faith; his brothers and sisters in Christ, by loving whom, "he knows he has passed from death unto life!" Moreover, they communicate very diligently every Sunday at cathedrals. The deans, chapters, precentors, subdeans, and canons, are every week proclaiming their union with the body of Christ, by partaking of the eucharistic supper. But is love amongst *them*? Do they love the brethren? are they ready to lay down their lives for their dear brethren? Is the Agape of the gospel radiant amidst the parade and ostentation of their empty ceremony? It is, then, obvious to every one that in the church of England there is not, and cannot possibly be any communion and fellowship of the saints; their hearts are not "comforted, being knit together in love:" nor do any of the functions of the clergy, according to the rubric and canons, tend "to the perfecting of the saints, to the edifying of the body of Christ."

But we may go farther, and confidently assert, that the effect of the established church is, and must be, to create schism and disunion in the body of Christ.

The clergy of the establishment, are, generally speaking, preeminently sectarian; they attach a vast importance to their immunities and privileges; they are bewitched with the phantom of their antiquity, and their idle dream of apostolical succession, and they ridiculously suppose themselves to be the only true and authentic ministers of religion in the kingdom. The cup of the state has intoxicated the dominant sect, and it is drunk with pride and insolence. The language of the clergy about "their excellent church as by law established," is too well known in all the nation to require any exhibition by quotations; for who has not heard or read their doctrine of intolerance, their exclusive self-admiration, and their angry denunciations of nonconformity? Hence it must follow, that churchmen have love for churchmen only; theirs is the counterfeit or sectarian love; the party-union; the old and not the new commandment.

I have already said, that there are pious Episcopalians who do love the brethren *as Christians*, in whatever circumstance they find them, but I should also add that some Episcopalians, of very high evangelical profession, are most deeply and lamentably beguiled in the delusion of sectarian fellowship. I could name a clergyman, well known and much respected, who made this awful confession of the state of his heart: "I could not bring myself to pray with a dissenter, however unquestionable his piety might be;" and it is no secret, that the flame of bigotry and intolerance is burning most fiercely, in these days, amongst many of the evangelical clergy and their adherents, so that they exceed even the high churchmen in sectarian zeal. Amongst these persons, therefore, there is no love of Christ's brethren; they love their sect, and the zealots of their sect; but those who are redeemed out of every kindred," and who have

been anointed into the royal priesthood out of their own little enclosure, they love not; they are, therefore, in this respect, exactly on a level with the followers of Mahomet; they know not "the new commandment."

This is the effect of an established religion; it is a natural and inevitable consequence of a union between church and state; but still a sectarian or counterfeit love must be engendered more or less by a priesthood under any circumstances: and the stronger will this evil be, in proportion to the strength of the sacerdotal elements. Next to the church of Rome, the unestablished church of England, the Protestant Episcopalians are the most sectarian of all professing Christians in the United States of North America, because they believe themselves to be such as the English Episcopalians believe themselves to be; and are fully persuaded that prelatical ordination, and "the three orders" are indispensable in the Christian ministry.

The institutions of other sects are less favourable to intolerance, and, consequently, to sectarian exclusiveness and sectarian love; but still it must be confessed that the traces are very faint of the redemption bond, amongst dissenters, whether we view them as a general body of Christians, or whether we inspect the operations of the individual churches. And, indeed, if they had attained to anything like the evangelical agape, not only would every lamented deficiency disappear, but the church would itself be so strong, that it would rapidly overpower those high places of the enemy which, at present, seem beyond all approach. The new commandment is to produce new effects; the love of the church is the power of the church, and it is only when it is in power that it can do wonders. When this rod of its strength is wanting, it is little more than a civil and respectable institution of men, capable, indeed, of inculcating a composed and grave

canon of morals, and of introducing an appearance of dignity and decorum in society, but utterly unable to prosecute or even undertake the promised victories of the gospel.

The effects of Messiah's reign are to be something more than decent and comely in society; they are to be wonderful, extraordinary, miraculous.—“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid.” The changes that shall take place shall be fundamental. “Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low.”

But if we think that the church has done her duty, when she has established a standard of sobriety, courtesy, and honesty amongst men, we are grievously mistaken: she has to exhibit to the world all her children as one family, united as one close-knit and vital body, having one spirit and one life; bound together, not in the ties of politeness, but of blood; not in a treaty of civility, but in a family compact of kindred affection. What then are the effects of this mystical union? precisely that which is now wanting in the churches; that all Christians should find their brethren in Christ really and substantially their friends, protectors, and counsellors, in time of need, distress, and apprehension; and that the church should be a port and refuge to the weary pilgrims, who are sore beset and buffeted with the tempest of adversity.

Christians are endowed with mighty privileges, and are made partakers of the divine nature, that they might, by the resplendent and godlike virtues of their society, bring back the glory of God upon earth, manifesting him as he has manifested himself to them—the God of love. For if we look upon the earth, out of the precincts of the church, we find it a desolation of selfishness, cruelty, and hardness of heart; a waste howling wilderness of sin and death; a habitation of miserable beings, who, without any choice of their own,

have been thrust into life for labour and sorrow, for vanity and vexation of spirit, and whose sad unfriended condition has led many to entertain hard thoughts of the Creator and Ruler of such a world, as if he was, indeed, the evil demiurge of Manichean theology. But Christians, the body of Christ, have received a commission to display the Creator in the majesty and beauty of his second creation ; to exalt by their faith and conversation, the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, and to shew that earth may be a second paradise in the light and glory of the sun of Righteousness. They have to prove by the lovely operations of the church, that the second creation is the work of the same God, who, being himself essential goodness and benevolence, did, at the first, suffer the plenitude of his felicity to overflow in thousands of channels, receiving from none, but imparting to all the joys and wonders of the first creation ; and though an enemy has embittered the channels, and introduced a curse where there was a blessing, and sorrow where there was joy, and sin where there was innocence, and death where there was life ; and though the earth is filled with wicked men, who, by their active crimes, plunge their fellow-creatures into distress, or, with pitiless apathy, pass them by unheeded, when distress is breaking their hearts ; yet the church, the nation of ransomed saints, have, in the gospel, and through the unction that teaches all things, received so excellent a plan for a universal restitution, that if they did but exactly follow that plan, and hearken to the instructions they have received, all evils, excepting disease and death, would disappear from amongst men, and the astonished world, in an acclamation of surprise and gratitude would cry out, "Behold! again, the God that made all things, and pronounced them to be good."

First of all, then, harmony, peace, and perfect friendship must be conspicuous in the church : it must

be seen that Christians love one another ; that their union is a wonder-working phenomenon, which no wisdom of the world can counterfeit ; that the gates of the Christian enclosure open into the sanctuary of love ; that a man—that is, Christ in his human nature joined to his brethren, and they in him—is a “ hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest ; ” that when the storm is raging in all the world besides there is peace there ; that every believer is the brother of every believer ; that they are all concerned in the temporal welfare of their brethren, and all deeply interested in their final and everlasting salvation.

But is it so at present? alas! let any one who is thoroughly acquainted with the churches give the melancholy answer? There are, indeed, Christian societies wherein the poor are treated with kindness and sympathy ; or, in some places, a few of the church-members are united in a pious friendship ; and brotherly love, *as far as it extends*, produces happy effects ; but, generally speaking, there is a sad distance between the brethren. They know not one another in the bonds of the gospel ; they are estranged by the cold and distant formalities of the ceremonious world ; they are either too intent on the pursuit of their own interest, or too deeply embedded in the well-lined nest of opulent selfishness, to care for the labour and the sorrows, the beauty and edification of the church.

In some instances, the component members of churches are so numerous that one half of them are ignorant of the other half ; sometimes the rich are totally indifferent to the poor, and the poor totally separated from the rich, and in too many instances an undue regard is shewn, both in language and manner, to those persons who are called “ respectable dissenters,” meaning thereby, dissenters who are comparatively rich, and, *therefore*, “ more respectable ” than the poorer brethren, according to the creed and dialect

of Mammon, which has a wider influence in this country than any where else on the face of the earth.

I know a numerous church, consisting of upwards of 600 members, managed under circumstances the most favourable;—a church in which the deacons and the worthy much-loved minister strenuously endeavour to perform the duties of their respective stations, and to give a good account of their stewardship; but even there, taking into account also the zealous assistance of other pious individuals, shall we say that this is a Christian family? or rather, looking on the unfriendly, unlovely, conduct of scores of its members, and perceiving that the bond of union extends only to the minority, shall we not, with grief, confess that a church in these days bears but a small resemblance to a society of believers in the apostolic age?

But if these be our confessions, when all the circumstances are favourable for developing Christian principle, what must we expect to find, when the pastor has not the spirit of love, and where the deacons are content with the dry routine of their official duties? Alas! it is painful to think of the state of some churches in this respect, and to be obliged to acknowledge that there are fraternities gathered together under the name of Christ, in which not one single spark of the love of brethren is visible; not one little scintillation which might possibly be blown up into a flame by the rough winds of adversity or persecution. I would here draw my bow at a venture, and let the arrow take its chance. I would put a question to any one whom it may concern, and who may happen to read this letter.—Let me suppose that, by some unwonted tribulation, you were bowed down with a weight of sorrow, that the cup of tears were given you to drink in great measure,—that many afflictions and many fears were pressing on your faith and patience, even to anguish, would you think of turning to that religious society, of which you

are a member, for counsel and sympathy? do you feel so bound to your nominal brethren, and are you so confident of the strength of their Christian love, that you have no doubt of their affectionate commiseration and tender support? and do you believe that they are so anxious to fulfil the law of Christ, according to the apostle's epitome of that law (Gal vi. 2), that you feel confident they will gladly bear your burthen? Let every one answer this question according to his experience, his knowledge, and his serious belief.

But then, it may be asked, what is the cause of this cold estrangement amongst the brethren? A heathen writer may, perhaps, assist us to answer the question. "The lawgiver whom the Christians worship" says Lucian of Samosata, "has taught them, that they are all brethren; *they have an extreme contempt for all the things of the world*; the expedition which they use, when any of their friends are known to be in trouble, is inconceivable; on such occasion they spare nothing; they despise death and surrender themselves to sufferings."

When Christians have an extreme "contempt for all the things of this world," they will love one another; but when they are embarked on the vast and dangerous ocean of adventure; when they are deeply engaged in making fortunes for their families; when the various branches of trade are occupying their close attention; when their hearts are given to Mammon, and when their general conduct exhibits a deep-seated reverence for wealth; when by their marriages they are entangling themselves in the affairs of the world:—then it must needs be that their love will wax cold to the church; that their private interests will preponderate; that some will think but seldom of their brethren, and many not at all; and hence the church, being a body of congregated, but not united materials, "the new commandment" will be utterly dead amongst them, and

men will not know that they are, indeed, Christ's disciples, "because they love one another."

There are also other reasons to be taken into the account, but I do not here recapitulate them as they are urged in the rest of these Letters: for whatever is as it should not be will tend to widen the separation amongst the brethren; nor would it be reasonable ever to expect a return of the primitive Agape, which, like *Astrœa*, has withdrawn from this wicked world, till the primitive order and government shall be restored to the churches. But if the love of the brethren is in this languid, inert, and almost extinct condition within the precincts of each individual church, what shall we say of the aggregate of all the Protestant believers, who, though they profess a lively hope of meeting one another in heaven, and of there joining together in one company, are well contented to raise up and consolidate impassable barriers between themselves whilst they are upon earth? what shall we say of the haughty and intolerant Churchman; the selfish and sectarian Wesleyan methodist, whose polity is manifestly framed for purposes of power and exclusion; and of the virtual and unseemly separation between the Independents and Baptists on the frivolous question of aspersion or immersion? It seems now to be well understood in a general, though unexpressed, consent, that the body of Christ is infinitely divisible; that each sect is a complete system of Christianity, and that all without the sect are to those within it as heathen men and publicans. Hence has arisen a strange dogma of false honour, that a man is bound to stick to his sect, and that if he seeks the society of *all* those who are sealed with the spirit of promise, he is wandering from his enclosure and going astray. But this is a wide field for discussion; I, therefore, content myself here with these few words to

shew that it is not altogether forgotten, and that it may remain for a future and more exact examination.

In conclusion, let me notice, as a curious proof of the little attention which this subject has obtained in the minds of those who ponder deeply on the welfare of Zion; that I never yet was fortunate enough to hear a sermon, whether in church or chapel, on the important topic of the love of the brethren; nor have I been able, by diligent search, to find a published discourse* on the subject; so that apparently no doctrine has, of late years been so much neglected, though there is none that requires more serious attention, if we desire to see the church in that condition which may be taken as a proof of its obedience and love to its divine head.

* Amongst the many hundred sermons published in the "Preacher, there is one, indeed, by the bishop of Chester, on John xiii. 35; but the worthy prelate has given the text a wide and vague meaning, foreign to its spirit, by applying it to the *public charities* of Christian countries and so drawing a contrast in favour of Christendom, when compared with the heathen nations! It would be almost impossible for an Anglican prelate to preach on the love of the brethren, without throwing a slur on the established church.

LETTER XVIII.

ONE of the glorious titles of our Lord, the Head of the church, is SUR SALEM, "the Prince of Peace," that Prince under whose government the people are to beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and, in obedience to whose commands, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither learn the cursed science of war any more. The name of the officers of the church is declared in prophecy to be emphatically PEACE (Is. lx. 17), and it is announced that under the dominion of Christ "violence shall be no more heard in the land, nor wasting, nor destruction in all our borders." When the wonderful child, expected for ages, was at last born, and when to us the Son was given, the company of heaven's messengers announced his birth to shepherds, with that famous anthem of love in the skies, "Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good-will towards men." When this Prince of Peace executed his ministry and preached the gospel, he virtually preached against war in every sermon, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; blessed are the peace-makers for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; I say unto you resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."—"He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword."

One would, therefore, naturally suppose that he

who should climb the gospel mount to enjoy a panoramic view of Christendom, would behold all its regions smiling in the golden tints of universal peace; all its borders blessed with a happy unity, and that "good and excellent" phenomenon, fraternal love, enriching every people with its miraculous influence, even as the dew of Hermon makes glad the mountain ridge of Sion. But, alas! it is not so. They that call themselves Christians have forgotten the title of their King, and turned his glory into shame. The gospel, which was meant to be a word of sovereign power by its own peculiar virtues; by its own strength, to go forth conquering and to conquer, and to be the rod and staff of Him whose kingdom is not of this world, has by the fleshly counsels and worldly compliances of its nominal disciples, been made to appear an instrument of human force, the religion of a warlike sect, the stimulus and the decoration of military renown. For if we first consider him who calls himself the vicar of Christ upon earth, the bishop of bishops, the Roman pontiff, and the most ancient possessor of Christendom, we shall in vain search for any legacy of peace that He ever has left to the world; on the contrary, the Pope was the fomentor of almost every war that harrassed Europe, till his influence in the cabinets of European potentates so declined that it could no longer be exerted to create confusion and discord amongst sovereigns, who had become too wise to listen to the evil counsels of a despicable priest. The Pope can now only intrigue about jesuits and monks, or exert his diplomatic skill in the framing of a Concordat, which any urgency converts into waste paper. The old disturber of nations is therefore now quiet, because he cannot be tumultuous, and he is peaceful because he cannot go to war; and as he is, moreover, an insolvent debtor, and is unable to pay his own body guards, there is no fear of his blowing

the trumpet of battle again, as he used to do in the days of Europe's darkness. But still the Roman Catholic religion is essentially warlike, for not only are the operations of war blessed by its ritual, but even the Virgin Mary is made, by them, a captain* of armies and a commander-in-chief of the most ferocious soldiers that have appeared on the field of battle since the crusades of Languedoc. There have been fighting Popes,—Popes who themselves commanded armies in person; there have been fighting bishops, fighting saints, fighting cardinals. Masses have been said on the field of battle; holy water, crosses, relics, standards are said to have done wonders in turning the fate of contending armies; Popes and saints have preached "war to the knife," and "blood to the horses' bridles." Saint Barnard, the seraphic Abbott of Clairvaux, whose works are a sort of text-book of sublimated devotion with the mystical school, exerted his vast influence in the papacy to excite the murderous passions of mankind, and his restless eloquence kindled the crusade of 1148, from which also emanated the luckless expeditions of the next century.—"Calmly seated in his cell, the gospels open before him, and with the events of the first crusade fresh in his recollection, St. Bernard thought that nothing was more praiseworthy or pious than to lash the passions of the western nations to a new fury for exterminating the infidel powers in the east."† His language is a strange instance indeed of studied iniquity. "Go

* Don Carlos has nominated the Virgin Mary the commander-in-chief of his rebel armies.—In the days of Richard II, Archbishop Arundel complained of the Lollards, that they despised the Virgin Mary and put her aside as useless, to whose influence the victorious achievements of English arms ought chiefly to be ascribed!

† Fanaticism. By the author of the *Natural History of Enthusiasm*.

forward," said he, "go forward, ye soldiers, and, with a dauntless mind, drive back the enemies of the cross of Christ, being assured of this, that neither life nor death *can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus*; and always remembering this, in every danger, that *whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's*. What glorious conquerors you will return from battle! what blessed martyrs will you die in the field! for a soldier of Christ, I say, kills in security and dies in security; he benefits himself when he is dying in the field, he benefits Christ when he is killing in battle." But sentiments like these, frightful and impious as they are, are by no means singular in the Papacy. Saint Pius V.,* and divers other Popes of sanguinary memory, have written with a pen not less bloody than that which the Seraphic St. Bernard employed to excite mankind to havoc and slaughter; and, in one word, we may consider the Vatican as a school of blood and murder for all Europe, which, till the 18th century, was kept in a state of constant agitation by the intrigues of the priests of Rome.

The Protestant Church of England is, like its mo-

* The letters of this rabid and horrible saint have been published in Latin, and some of the worst of the collection have been translated into French, by De Potter. A passage from one of them will suffice, to show how the pontiff was the secret cause of the wars of his generation. He is writing to Louis Gonzague, Duke of Nevers, Governor of Champagne. "As for the aid of money, which you demand for the king of France, your master, you should know that we have already had this matter laid before us by the king's ambassador; and we have promised his majesty, that he should always find us ready to help him. But as we have not any large sums at our disposal, having spent all that we had in hand, in aiding the emperor elect against the Turks, in assisting the queen of Scots and the knights of St. Malta, and a great number of other contributions equally necessary, we shall be obliged to lay new imposts on the people of our states, which will cause some delay in sending the necessary supplies to the king, &c.

ther and predecessor, warlike in a high degree. The Anglican Episcopalians are a fighting sect; their liturgy is belligerent—their head is a soldier—their language is threatening and violent, and the sermons of their priests have frequently been preached for the express purpose of exciting the martial propensities of a deceived and credulous people. Twice every day, in every cathedral in England, do the clergy solemnly pray to God, that the king “may vanquish and overcome all his enemies;” and up to this present hour it never, perhaps, in one single instance, has been taught by any clergyman, that war is an illegal and impious trade for Christians. On the contrary, the American war, and the war against the French republic, were frequently commended from the pulpit, in impassioned harrangues; and not one dignitary only owed his elevation in the church to his servile zeal “for the just and necessary war.”

The dissenters have hitherto copied the dominant sect in their belligerent propensities. The Independents came into the world at first, like Minerva, all armed. We know of them first as a fighting sect of saints, following Oliver Cromwell in his “*crowning mercies*,” of victory after victory; till they had placed their great captain on the throne of England’s ejected kings. The language of the pious soldiers of the Protectorate may well be placed side by side with the epistles of Saint Bernard, or Saint Pius V.

Thomas Harrison, one of King Charles’s judges, a famous soldier and friend of Oliver Cromwell, used occasionally to write letters to his general from the camp, mingling in his correspondence notices of war and effusions of piety. “My Lord,” said he, “let waiting on Jehovah be the greatest and most considerable business you have every day; reckon it more than to eat, sleep, or counsel together; run aside sometimes from your company, and get a word with the Lord. Why

should you not have three or four precious souls always standing at your elbow, with whom you might, now and then, turn into a corner? I have found refreshment and mercy in such a way. Here is little news; only Charles Vane is returned from Portugal, who left our fleet indifferently well. They have seized nine of the Portugal ships. The Father of mercies visit and keep your soul close to him continually; protect, prosper, and preserve you, is the prayer of," &c.

Thus does the profession of piety alternate with the profession of arms, like alternate lairs of gravel or clay in the alluvial deposits.

After the revolution of 1688, the dissenters joined the war-party with all their hearts; their interests were bound up with those of King William: they were personal enemies of Louis XIV., and of the House of Stewart; and from the flight of James II. to the battle of Preston Pans, were as thorough advocates of battle, as could be found in the British realms. Dr. Doddridge is said to have enlisted a regiment for the service of government; and the warlike spirit observable in Dr. Watts' hymn book*, proves, beyond doubt, that the dissenters had a martial echo in their hearts,

* " Go with our armies to the fight,
Like a confederate God :
In vain confederate powers unite
Against thy lifted rod

" Our troops shall gain a wide renown
By thine assisting hand ;
'Tis God that treads the mighty down,
And makes the feeble stand.

" In his salvation is our hope,
And in the name of Israel's God,
Our troops shall lift their banners up,
Our navies spread their flags abroad !

responsive to the spirit-stirring alarum of drum and trumpet.

We see, then, that the fanaticism of the banner has been conspicuous amongst all the leading sects of Christendom; the priests of the Vatican and of Lambeth have excited wars of oppression; the Protestant dissenters have never yet emancipated themselves from the great delusion, that it is meritorious to fight "for their God, their liberties, and their country." The new creation, covenanted to Jesus of Nazareth, has been retarded by the united efforts of Papist, Episcopalian, Puritan, and Methodist;* and the Dove of Peace, which came with an olive-branch to assure the world that the tide of carnage was now turned, has been driven backwards, by a strange concord of rival sects, to make way for the cruel eagle of war,—the harbinger of oppression and desolation to the earth.

And the evil here is very great, if we remember that Christian pietists have not only tacitly permitted war, but have frequently defended and advocated it by a miserable perversion of Scripture, and dangerous sentiments of distorted devotion. "Some duties grow amongst thorns," says the pious Samuel Rutherford, "as to be killed all the day long, and to take patiently

" O may the memory of thy name
Inspire our armies to the fight!
Our foes shall fall and die with shame
Or quit the field with shameful fright."
See also ii. 3.

* John Wesley was a decided advocate of war, educated in the school of Ultra-Toryism, he never was able to perceive that the profession of arms is incompatible with the Gospel. He had high notions of the power of constituted authority; he prided himself that some of his chief followers were "good soldiers;" and thus let slip a golden opportunity for instituting a sect whose influence, by this time, would have well-nigh silenced the din of arms. The principles of peace are entirely unknown amongst the Wesleyan Methodist.

the spoiling of our goods for Christ. Some duties grow among roses, and are honourable and glorious duties, *as to kill and subdue, in a lawful war the enemies of God*. The former are no sign of wrath; nor the latter of being duly convinced of the excellency of Christ, except in so far as we use them, *through the grace of Christ, as becometh Saints.*"*

Jeremy Taylor in his "Ductor Dubitantium," has laid it down as a canon of Christian morals that lying, deceiving, and dissembling, besides the ordinary acts of violence, are lawful in war; and has undertaken to point out the lies that may, or may not be, told by generals who are endeavouring to outwit one another.

So that the reputed teachers of the gospel have not laboured to establish the principles of their master in that splendid singularity which is their beauty and power.—They have not placed the strength of the evangelical kingdom in the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, but have gone down to Egypt for help; and have taught, that the wisdom of the gospel is in perfect harmony with the ancient code of force. But this is shamefully to deride and mock the Lord of glory; for he whose kingdom is not of this world, and who declined the help of twelve legions of angels,

* Christ dying, pp. 187. Edd. 1647.

The Protestant religion has been established in Scotland by the sword: and to the sword all the Presbyterian Ministers seem fully prepared to appeal "in defence of their religion." Queries put to Mr. Glas, by the Synod of Angus and Mearns with his answers, April 1728. "*Quer.* Is it your opinion that it is unlawful to defend the true religion by arms, or not? *Ans.* The true religion cannot be defended by arms, as may the natural and civil rights and liberties of mankind. It must be defended another way. Eph. vi. ii. 12, 13. 2 Cor. x. 4. Glas's works i. 149. The question and answer should both be noticed. The question put by the synod was to ascertain whether Glas opposed war as a help of religion, a doctrine of which he was suspected—the answer pleads guilty to the *heresy*; but admits that it is lawful to fight for the civil liberties of mankind.

cannot but look with grief and pity on his servants, who seek to make themselves stronger than he was in the days of his flesh, and to turn "the faith and patience of the Saints" into a system of injurious violence and opposition. It is a vain effort which the churches are making to convert the world to Christ, unless they shall first fully adopt all the principles of the gospel; and though, in the opinion of many, the days are approaching, when all eastern people shall bow themselves before the footstool of the Most High God, and shall "surname themselves by the name of Israel," yet no such blessed æra shall dawn upon us till the missionaries go forth as accredited heralds of universal peace, and till all nations shall understand that the gospel preaches peace, not only to a man's heart, but to whole nations, and that the voice of them who published the glad tidings of salvation, silences the roar of battle whilst it proclaims "peace on earth, good-will towards men."—"for he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares; and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Let us leave the spurious and adulterate *gospel of battle* to Rome and her children, but let it be our labour to prove that the *gospel of Christ* is indeed a new thing upon the earth; that it is not framed upon the maxims of a flexible morality, nor can accommodate itself to the pressure of cupidity, patriotism, or ambition, but that it has come from heaven to command and not to obey—to teach and not to hearken—to lead and not to follow. Let us throw down all the obstructions which have hitherto prevented the river of peace extending itself to the church (Isaiah lxvi.12.); and then "shall the glory of the gentiles be like a flowing stream;" but as long as we tolerate or do not

oppose the detestable doctrine of war—as long as we accede with tacit compliances to the sanguinary delusion under which the whole earth has hitherto groaned, it will be a vain, an idle, almost *an impious* task to make it seem that we heartily believe in the glory of that King of Righteousness whom we preach.

We pray for a liberal effusion of the Holy Spirit on the churches; we are importunate for revivals, and we talk much of the latter-day glory, as if an overwhelming Pentecost were to extinguish all the evils that are done under the sun: but there have been liberal showers already from heaven which we would not receive; the doctrine of Emanuel has already dropped as the rain; his spirit has distilled as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and we have rejected it; had we accepted *all* his word with joyfulness—had we been indeed the children of peace, the fruit of peace would even now have been comely and beautiful in all the earth, and the enthroned company of prophets would not yet be waiting in heaven to behold the accomplishment of those predictions which they learned from the Holy Ghost. Let us not then, in Antimonian indolence, look upwards for a miracle, but inwards for repentance, knowing this that the way of the divine dispensation is to give blessings on the church when she is obedient, and to shut her up in straits and difficulties when she herself is limiting the Holy One of Israel. The doctrine of peace is eminently the doctrine of faith; for when can faith be in such lively exercise, as when the Assyrian is in the land, and Israel is without arms? “Some trust in chariots and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God;” we will remember that name not to make it a watch-word for the battle, not through it to give a deeper intonation to the war-whoop, not to marhall, by its awful spell, the multitudinous chivalry to deeds of prowess; but in the humble trust of

Christians we will sit still while the war is hot around us, and in every pause of the onset, we will preach Jesus Christ and him crucified,—Jesus the humble, the enduring, the patient,—Jesus the sufferer, the king of martyrs, the friend and helper of the poor, the liberator of prisoners, the restorer of paths to dwell in, the repairer of the breach, the prince of peace, of the increase of whose government and *peace* there shall be no end. We will show that the gospel is the light of the new creation, that it has new maxims, doctrines, and ideas; that it has the sceptre of a new King, and that all old things are to fade away before the brightness of his rising. To all the arguments of force or fear we will preach faith; we will shew that war is “the gross darkness of the people,” the strength of Satan, the life and quickness of all the evil done under the sun. And then, if we work righteousness, the Lord will meet us, and the holy spirit will indeed come to heal, to renew, to revive again; but the Head of the church expects us to do our part; for as he was manifested amongst us to destroy the works of the devil, so has he gone up on high to leave his vice-regal sceptre upon earth in the hands of his saints, that body of kings and priests which is called “The Church.” To them has he entrusted the task of destroying the works of the devil; he looks to them to gain the victory over evil; and if they look in faith to him for help they shall be victorious. The greater the difficulty in opposing ancient opinions, so much the greater glory in lifting up the standard against them; the deeper rooted the prejudices which we endeavour to eradicate, so much greater will our strength appear when we shall have uprooted them. Let us then to the work; not by miracles and signs from heaven, but by the holy reluctations of Christians against evil, by the testimony of their work, by their faith, their zeal, their patience, and their prayers; by their stirring and

example and evangelical excellence, which, through the grace of God, shall do wonders as great in the moral world, as the finger of Jehovah wrought in vanquishing the physical obstacles of Egypt.

In this matter then I must report that the body of Christians have forgotten their privileges: but it is time now to awake; and there are already signs of awakening for which we should feel thankful; and when the truth is perceived it must be acted on, not remissly and negligently, but with zeal and alacrity. *The principles of peace must be incorporated in Church discipline.* The trade of war must be denounced, and a soldier must be excommunicated from the churches as an offender. Let war, offensive and defensive, be Anathema Maranatha in all Christian societies, and then, but not till then, may we declare that we love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

I urge the subject with some anxiety at present, because I anticipate that the time is coming when there may be "a war of opinion" on the continent; when the principles of liberty may shake the thrones of despotism in a bloody strife. When that day shall come dissenters will by all their habitual feelings take a lively interest in the struggle; but then will be the time to bring forth the shield of faith—then will it be our duty to turn a deaf ear to the temptation of force, and in the hour of national excitement to preach peace to a tumultuating people. To do so will be apparently to render a negative aid to the despotic party; but let us not despair, but rather abide by the gospel; place the issue in the hands of the Lord, and *stand still to behold the salvation of God.*

LETTER XIX.

AMONGST the afflicting evils which the wickedness of man has established upon earth, the greatest beyond compare is slavery ; indeed its consequences are so dreadful, the sins which it engenders are of such gigantic proportions, and all its accompaniments are so loathsome and hideous, that the minds even of benevolent persons seem to revolt from contemplating it, as offering a spectacle of crime and cruelty too deep for a remedy, and too vast for sympathy Slavery is an infinite evil ; the calculations of its murders, its rapine, its barbarities, its deeds of lust and licentiousness, though authenticated by the most unquestionable authorities would produce a total of horrors too great to be believed : and to narrate the history of these cruelties which have been perpetrated by American slave masters within the last five years, or in Jamaica ; even since the passing of the fraudulent act of pretended “emancipation,” would be to tell idle fables, in the opinion of those who have not deeply studied this tragical subject. But though the evils of slavery are incalculable, and though the contemplation of it is exquisitely painful, it is, nevertheless, a paramount duty imposed on Christians to grapple with the monster-crime, both because the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ is implicated in its successful overthrow ; and because it is, at this present time, fostered in its strength of iniquity by those, alas ! who not only profess to have discovered the quintessence of liberty,

but to have surpassed all Christians in an overflowing measure of godliness.

I pass over, for the present, slavery in other countries,—and that barbarous metastasis of slavery, the system of Apprenticeship in our West Indian and South African colonies and the Mauritius—to set my foot in the United States of North America, where the outcry against slavery is greater than in other country under heaven; because it is in that country that we hear more of liberty and equality, more of religion and revivals, more of the bustle and machinery of piety than in any other land where the name of Christ is named. For if that mighty continent were a satrapy of despotism, if it were crouching under the sceptre of some lawless autocrat, and its people were but herds and flocks at his sovereign disposal, then perhaps we should but give the passing tribute of a sigh to America disgraced with a population of slaves; but when this country sets itself up as a beacon of freedom to cast a light of superiority across the Atlantic on the enthralled or imperfectly emancipated nations of the East; when we remember that neither king, nor priest, nor noble can either oppress or plunder in all its wide domain, that the regal talisman has there been broken which formerly bound the popular Spirit, and that equality is the Alpha and Omega of the national institutes, then does slavery amongst such a people appear transcendantly wicked; a sin which, in addition to its usual cruelty and selfishness is in them loaded with hypocrisy and ingratitude;—with hypocrisy as it relates to their pretensions of liberty, and with ingratitude as it relates to that God who gave them to be free. And indeed this sin makes all the institutions of America, civil and religious, little better than a solemn mockery, a tragical jest for the passers-by of other nations, who, seeing two millions and a half of slaves held in fetters by vaunting freemen and ostentatious

patriots, wag the head at the disgusting sight, and cry out deridingly to degraded America, “ Art *thou* too become weak as we,—art *thou* become like one of us? —the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.”

But if America were only politically defiled by slavery, and a system of gross injustice to its free-coloured population—if it had only debased itself down to a level with Russia, the scourge of Poland, or had only imitated the Turkish tyranny, it would not be a subject for animadversion in these letters. There is still a more serious view of its criminality—a view of it as it is seen in connexion with the Christian religion, which heightens the infernal tints of the picture into an intensity of guilt too fearful to contemplate: nevertheless, it *must* be contemplated, and with care and minuteness too; for recent events have, in a manner, made the English appear to join hand in hand with the American churches, and, with a most convenient aberration of vision, to wink at the iniquity of the transatlantic slave-drivers and revivalists.

But here first we should remember the extraordinary, and to us almost incredible, position of very many of the American churches with regard to slavery; we should remember that a vast number of Christian ministers are slave proprietors, that many deacons, ruling elders, local and itinerant preachers, and many Episcopalian church officers are slave masters, that they buy and sell slaves, separate husband, wife, and children “to make a good lot,” without the least remorse when the temptation offers, and that, too, in many instances, where the poor slaves are their brothers or sisters in Christ, members of Christian societies, who have been admitted into Christian fellowship on a due consideration and acknowledgment of their piety and their faith in the Redeemer. But the mere act of Christians buying and selling Christians is not

the only crime for our consideration; all the concomitants of slavery are, of necessity, to be taken into the account: a master of slaves cannot but be corrupt, his daily life is one of injustice and contempt of the laws of God; his conscience is either hardened and reckless in the commission of sin, or he wilfully and wittingly does that which he knows to be wrong. Shall I quote here the well known story of a popular minister flogging his household slaves on a Sabbath morning, leaving them tied up to the beams of the house whilst he was preaching and praying to his congregation, and then returning to finish the incomplete punishment by a second flogging after sermon? Shall I quote another authenticated story, or rather history, of a living "pious" female who has built and handsomely endowed a costly chapel, with schools, alms-houses, and all the et-cætera of devout munifi-

* One of the most recent stories of this sort, that I remember to have seen, is of a minister, who, *in a quiet way*, sold his slave—a member of his church. He wished the transaction to be managed in such a manner as not to attract attention. The purchaser of the poor slave told his victim, "that his master had ordered him to accompany him to such a place." The slave saw through the plot, and cried out, "Oh! Sir, I know our minister has sold me—he has not courage to tell me so himself; but I know I am sold to you now. Well; God forgive our minister!" It is, perhaps, to be taken as a sign of a better æra approaching, that these wicked wretches begin to be ashamed of their iniquity.

In Mr. Abdy's tour there is a frightful story of a baptist minister "of the name of Andrew Marshall, and possessed of property, supposed to be worth 40,000 dollars. He was living at Savannah, with his wife and children—the latter, with their mother, were his slaves. A planter, in the neighbourhood, solicited this man's daughter to live with him. She refused, and when urged, *by her father* to accept the offer, alleged as a reason for not complying with their joint importunities, that her affections were engaged to a colored man, whom she had promised to marry. Her plea and her entreaties were equally unavailing. The wretch sold her to the less guilty seducer, and she was then living the mother of nine children by this forced concubinage."

cence, but who always insists on flogging her slaves with *her own hands*, because she suspects either the mercy or the inefficiency of the usual executioner? Shall I mention “pious” persons leaving legacies of slaves, in trust, for the benefit of a chapel? or of “pious” persons making speeches, and composing pamphlets, to prove that Paul’s epistle to Timothy was written for the express purpose of preventing the manumission of slaves? Shall I quote the book of the Reverend Simon Clough, Doctor of Divinity and Doctor of Laws, in which he undertakes to justify slavery from the Scriptures, and to prove that all clergymen who advocate immediate abolition, are false teachers, and ought to be dismissed their congregation? Shall I record the green curtain of Dr. —’s chapel, and of divers other chapels, to separate the goats from the sheep, —to place a vail of contumely between the dark-skinned and fair-tinted Christians? but, indeed, examples like these, though at hand to an infinite amount, if wanted, are mere drops in this raging ocean of iniquity; for we must remember the whole system of savage laws and practices in the slave states of America, of which all who are slaveholders in that country must share the guilt; their codes of cruelty and studied oppression, which not only define* slaves to be brutes, but studiously endeavour to prevent a master shewing mercy to his slave; which make the education of a

* “A slave is one who is in the power of a master, to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry, his labour; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything but which must belong to his master.”—*Louisiana Code*, No. 3.

“Slaves shall be deemed taken, reported, and adjudged, to be chattels personal in the hands of their masters and possessors, to all intents and purposes whatsoever.”—*Law of South Carolina.—Brevard’s Digest*, 229.

Inquiry into the character of the Colonization Society, by W. JAY, pp. 122.

slave felony, and order the magistrates to flog any slave who, by any means, endeavours to instruct himself in reading or writing. In North Carolina it is the law, that if a freeman shall sell or give a slave *any book* (Bible not excepted, indeed they dread that the most), he shall pay a fine of £200; but if the offender is a free person of colour, he shall be fined, flogged, and imprisoned! In Georgiana, any justice of the peace may, at his discretion, break up any religious assembly of slaves, and, without trial, order every individual of the congregation to receive twenty-five stripes, *well laid on*; so that with laws like these, it is no wonder to hear the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, in December, 1833, give the following dismal description of slavery.

“ Who would credit it, *that in these years of revival*, and benevolent effort, in this Christian republic, there are over two millions of human beings in the condition of heathen, and in some respects in a worse condition. From long continued and close observation, we believe that their moral and religious condition is such that they may justly be considered the heathen of this Christian country, and will bear comparison with any heathen in any country in the world. The negroes are destitute of the gospel, and *ever will be, under the present state of things*. In the vast field, extending from an entire state beyond the Potomac to the Sabine river, and from the Atlantic to the Ohio, there are not *twelve* men exclusively devoted to the religious instruction of the negroes. In the present state of feeling in the south, a ministry of their own colour, could neither be obtained nor TOLERATED. But do not the negroes have access to the gospel, through the stated ministry of the whites? We answer NO; the negroes have no regular and efficient ministry; as a matter of course no churches. We know of but five churches in the slave-holding states built expressly for

their use ; they are all in the state of Georgia. We may inquire if they there enjoy the privileges of the gospel in their own houses, and on *our plantations*? Again we return a negative answer. They have no Bibles to read by their own firesides,—they have no family altars; and when in affliction, sickness, or death, they have no ministers to address to them the consolations of the gospel, nor to bury them with solemn and appropriate services.”

If the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia had gone one step farther, and had pledged themselves not only that all the ministers and elders constituting the Synod, should immediately emancipate the slaves “on their plantations,”—that no slave-holder should be retained in their churches, and none admitted for the future, they would indeed have done themselves honour; but that was too much to be expected from the reverend doctors of the Synod. It is one thing to preach the gospel to slaves, and another to renounce some thousand dollars by letting the oppressed go free.

To America, then, thus groaning under cruel taskmasters, who profess to worship Jehovah, the Emancipator of Israel, did the English congregational churches lately send out a solemn deputation of Christian inspectors, to take note of the state of the American churches; to communicate such sentiments as they might deem expedient and proper, and to report, on their return home, what they had seen and heard, as faithful witnesses. The result of that mission has been laid before the public in the “Narrative of the Visit to the American Churches, by Drs. Reed and Matheson;” and it is to this book that I would now draw your attention, though I beg to observe, that I should not have thought it worthy of the slightest notice, if either it had been a publication of an individual in his private capacity, or had not been accepted and acknowledged by the parties for whom it was written: but as it

stands before the world the authenticated, accepted, and approved* report of the Congregational Union, and has been stoutly defended in dissenting publications, against some just and some very unjust attacks which it has provoked, I look upon it as speaking the mind of the congregational churches, and, on that account, deserving the most serious examination.

The matter of religious institutions and operations, the college commencements, and the revivals, as reported in the "Visit," are here foreign to my purpose; neither do I feel the least concerned in the copious descriptions of scenery, which, in my opinion, had better have been reserved for the pages of a novel. My subject here is slavery,—to examine the acts of the deputation in this searching question, and to see whether the English churches have, through their deputies, assisted or retarded the holy cause of emancipation; whether they have exhibited the church of Christ in an attitude of opposition to the greatest of crimes, or have virtually passed it over without protest or reproof.

But we must not forget that the deputation reached the United States in a time of high excitement, owing to the active operation of the newly-formed associations of abolitionists, aided by the itinerant labours and stirring oratory of Mr. George Thompson; and that this excitement was greatly increased by the angry

* "Dr. Reed presented to the chairman a copy of the 'Narrative of the Visit to the American Churches, by the Deputation from the Congregational Union of England and Wales.' The Rev. T. Binney moved,—'That the best thanks of this assembly be presented to the Rev. Gardiner Spring, D.D., for his sermon: and also to his honoured brethren and associates, who have this day represented the American churches amongst us, and that each of those beloved brethren be requested to accept a copy of the Narrative of our deputation, as a humble memorial of the delightful transactions of this day.' "

Minutes of the fifth annual Assembly of the Congregational Union.—pp. 13, 14.

opposition of the Colonization Society, a body in possession of the field before the abolitionists, and organized for the express purpose of doing acts of oppression and injustice* to the coloured population, under the specious names of humanity and philanthropy! In this crisis, therefore, the duty of the English churches was clear and distinct, to send out deputies, whose principal duty should be to ascertain the extent in which their transatlantic brethren are implicated in the crime of slavery, and to convey such messages of expostulation as the enormity of the sin imperatively demands; for if we dispatch Christian ambassadors from this country merely to inspect colleges,—to assist at revival meetings,—to hear and preach sermons,—to join in prayer-meetings,—to pay and receive compliments,—to sit at feasts and festivals, and to bring back the amaranthine crown of a Doctor's degree, whilst a sin so frightful, so appalling, so unparalleled as slave-driving in the hands and hearts of "pious" Christians, is entirely passed over,—then, indeed, we have done that which will pass current with the world,—we have well acted the courtly ceremony of international politeness; but the sword which our Lord left as a legacy in the hands of the church (Matt. x. 34), we have allowed to rust in the scabbard, that we might maintain a polite peace with Satan and his loyal subjects.

Now, on turning to the pages of the "Visit"—which, without circumlocution, may be called Dr. Reed's book,—what information do we gain on the guilt or innocence of the American Christians with regard to slavery? what do we learn of the scandalous injustice and pitiful hatred manifested by vast multitudes of Christians towards their unhappy compatriots,

* If any one yet doubts the true nature of the Colonization Society, he must read Judge Jay's anatomy of it; a little book which has been republished in this country.

the colour of whose skin excludes them from the benefits of freedom, though they carry about with them the name of freemen? Does Dr. Reed expatiate on the moral plague of the country? Does he narrate some of the shocking circumstances of malignant prejudice and hardness of heart manifested towards the coloured population, which, if he did not see with his own eyes, he certainly must have heard of everywhere? Alas! on these subjects Dr. Reed's book is altogether silent, and silent to such an extent that he who should read "the Visit" and the contemporary Tour of Mr. Abdy, must come to the conclusion, that either Mr. Abdy's Tour is a book of fables or Dr. Reed's a volume of *suppressions*.

Dr. Reed does, indeed, occasionally tell a story of slavery, and occasionally sprinkles his narrative with sentences of abhorrence of the sin, but he takes good care that the story shall not touch the consciences of any "gentleman" in America, and that the sentiment of abhorrence shall fall harmless in the depths of space, with all the glitter and innocence of a sky-rocket. For who in these days does not mouth against slavery in the abstract? What promoter of oppression dares to do otherwise than to declare he abominates slavery? — does not Lord S * * * say so much? do not Elliott Cresson and Mr. Breckinridge? do not the Liverpool speculators, some of whom at this very hour are receiving eleven per cent. for their money employed in the illicit slave trade? A general sentiment of abhorrence of slavery is, therefore, a mere figure of speech,—a flower of rhetoric,—a sprig of fashionable euphuism; but when the speaker or writer descends from generalities to particulars, when he specifies the district, the town, the villages,—when he names the men, the sect, or the preachers, who are implicated in the crime, then he becomes vulgar, then he is a fanatic, an incendiary, a firebrand, &c. &c., "he turneth the world upside down,"—and Dr. Reed is no incendiary.

The epitome of Dr. Reed's observations may be seen in the following sentence, which, though guarded with cautious vagueness of phraseology, is still capable of analysis: "All the northern states have entirely washed their hands of slavery and the slave trade; and the middle states are free or *will quickly be so*. The religious of every name and every place are *prepared* to admit and deplore *the evil of slavery in itself*, and are expressing an anxious desire for any remedy that might be effectual."—(Vol. ii. p. 286.)

"The religious," that is, the people who call themselves so, or are so called by courtesy "in the Visit to the American churches," are prepared to admit and deplore—the evil of slavery in itself,—not that they either deplore or admit at present the evil of slavery; on the contrary, they uphold and cherish it, both in theory and in practice; it is the guilt of thousands who are called "religious" in America; but then they are "PREPARED to deplore,"—in the way to repentance, approaching to that state of mind when it will be possible, some time or other, to convince them of their guilt—on the road to clear sightedness—no matter how far off, but still on the road; so that, judging from this statement, we may hope that at some future period, of which we cannot venture to fix the date, these pious people will be in a fair way to conversion, and will, at last, acknowledge that sin is sinful! Now, supposing that Dr. Reed had said that the clergy of the establishment were *prepared* to admit the evils of the union of church and state—which he or any one else might say if the controversy required it—how much nearer should we be to the mark of *separating* church and state than we are at present? "Preparation," therefore, is but poor news; we want to hear of something much more advanced and decisive; we would gladly behold something much more substantial and comprehensible than this meagre shadow of a hope.

But, alas! even this poor assurance fails us when more closely examined, for "the religious in America" are, even in the *magnus annus* of their conversion, only to admit and deplore the evil of slavery IN ITSELF,—they will deplore it as a general proposition, as an abstract principle, as a moral deduction; but they will be very cautious, they will keep to generalities, and not descend to particulars, or admit the evils of their own slavery; they will make brisk use of the racket, and when the ball of accusation is approaching to give them a blow, dexterously to strike it off to their neighbours; just as dissolute men will very patiently hear sermons preached against sin in the abstract, taking it for granted that a generality does not apply to themselves.

So much, then, for "the religious" of America, their preparations, and their abstractions: we come now to something more precise and tangible, for Dr. Reed, with all his prudence, could not entirely avoid the question of immediate abolition. "I would not," says Dr. Reed, "be understood to complain of *the great principle* which the Anti-Slavery Society adopts, but of the methods by which it has sought to give it predominance." *To complain of the great principle* would, indeed, have been a strong measure for a deputy of the English churches; Dr. Reed, therefore, only complains of the methods adopted to carry out that principle. When the principle is by the shouting and hallooing of the Abolitionists compelled to break cover, when it can no longer creep into holes and hiding places, but must, per force, take the open country, then Dr. Reed complains of the methods adopted by the Abolitionists, and for the following reasons: "Had the Anti-Slavery Society *calmly* and firmly announced, on religious grounds, that all slavery is sin against God, as well as an offence against society, and that as such it requires, without delay, to be abolished; and had it refused to

come down from this high vantage ground, to deal in personal invective and *exaggerated statement*, it would have won its way *unresisted* over the whole portion of *the religious and philanthropic community*."

Dr. Reed requires, therefore, "calmness" of the Abolitionists, and if they had been calm, he says the cause of abolition would have been admitted in all the Union, at least by all the religious and philanthropic of the Union—*without resistance!* a most surprising assertion indeed; for, in the first place, there is the Colonization Society already in the field, with its scheme of deep-laid fraud and intricate falsehood warmly embraced "by the religious and philanthropic" slave-drivers, as a method for extricating themselves out of the scrape of abolition,—then there is the whole array of the southern and most of the middle provinces, deep in the crime of slavery, a busy, profligate, hard-hearted population of merciless tyrants, many of them very "religious and philanthropic,"—many of them crying out loudly, "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord." Then there are the representatives in Congress, even of the northern parts, fearful of giving offence to the southern slave-drivers, and voting with the rest to *continue or extend slavery in newly-incorporated states*,* —there is a slave-driving President, and all the people, from Dan to Beersheba, insulting and oppressing the free people of colour, and yet, against all this, "a calm declaration of the sin of slavery would have won its way *unresisted* throughout the whole union"!!!

But let us for a moment suppose, that a calm course of sermons against slavery had been preached by the deputation in Georgia or the Carolinas, can we sup-

* Congress, in incorporating the territory of the Arkansas, this year, into the Union, has guaranteed the full exercise of slavery in this new limb of the State! What, then, becomes of Dr. Reed's flattering picture of "preparation!"

pose that they would have escaped Lynch law before their mission was ended, and that the exaltation of Haman would have been the reward of their labours?

Dr. Reed proceeds: "the Anti-Slavery Society has allowed nothing to prejudice, nothing to interest, nothing to time." Here the caution of the balancer fails him; he throws too much weight now on the other side, and falls into the arms of the slave-drivers, for it appears that if the Anti-Slavery Society had made allowances *for the prejudices and interests* of the slave-drivers, and had given them *sufficient time*, it would have been well; but they have not done so,—and therefore have erred. "Prejudices, money, and time"! and that from an abolitionist; one who has nothing to say against "the great principle," one who a minute before had remarked that the proper course to be observed was "calmly and firmly to announce, on religious grounds, that all slavery is a sin against God, as well as an offence against society, and that as such it requires, WITHOUT DELAY, to be abolished."—p. 260.

But Dr. Reed has still graver charges against the Anti-Slavery Society: "it has borne on its front defiance *and not conciliation*, and this not merely against slavery, but against the slave-holder,—means, leading to the result, and *remuneration consequent* upon it, instead of being considerably discussed, are peremptorily denounced."

So, then, at last, we see the scheme of the deputy of the Independent churches: slavery and the slave-driver ought to have been conciliated, "remuneration" ought to have been discussed, prejudices and interest ought to have received their due allowance, and time ought to have been given the slave-holders; and then these religious and philanthropic people would have, "without resistance," become emancipators,—just as our West-Indian slave holders hated slavery when

they pocketed twenty millions to persuade them to change its name into apprenticeship!

I would ask, therefore, ought the congregational pædobaptist dissenters of England to be contented with the achievements of their deputation? May they not with reason complain that the English churches, by the management of their ambassadors, have been made to appear indifferent to the crime of slavery? and that they who are most anxious to come forth boldly in the cause of abolition, have been kept within the trenches by the too cautious policy of their plenipotentiaries? Why should not the truth be told? why sacrifice the character of all the churches to the ease of individuals who, in the opinion of very many, have failed in pressing the objects of their mission? and why, rather than make a confession which might afford perhaps a momentary triumph in certain quarters, allow future generations to believe that the English Congregational Societies of 1836 approved the conduct of a deputation which must be condemned the more it is examined?

The Congregational Magazine has, indeed, undertaken the defence of Dr. Reed's book; but in what does the defence mainly consist? In giving large quotations of the author's descriptions of American scenery, and in holding up to admiration sundry novel-like passages, which, with whatever elegance they may be written, ought certainly never to have been introduced in such a book, and which are so common in the works of modern fiction, or in the pages of fashionable tourists, as to pass for mere ballast in these days.

If I were to concede all the merit claimed for these passages, and were to pass over some glaring instances of bad taste,* still this question is to be answered, what have the English churches to do with romantic

* I purposely omit any further remarks on these subjects, reserving them, if required, for some future occasion.

descriptions of woods, hills, dales, gliding streams, moonshine, and waterfalls? And in what respect are they edified by this sentimental eulogy of nature, which might be smiled at in the pages of a Christmas "Annual," but is something more than ridiculous from a grave deputy of "the Conventicle,"—"a budge doctor of the Stoic fur?"

The dissenters had a right to expect a very different book, and if ever they should send forth another deputation, we must hope and believe that they will select for the mission individuals who can both act and write in the plain straightforward way of the olden times,—who will not be coaxed into an injurious silence, by a little valueless hospitality, nor think it one duty of their mission to collect the scattered rays of admiration into a focus on their own persons.

LETTER XX.

It has been singularly unfortunate for the honour of England, that the deputation of her Congregational Pædobaptist churches should have been immediately succeeded by a deputation from the Baptist churches, as little disposed as their predecessors to speak the language of uncompromising abolition to the slave-driving "Christians" of America.

Doctors Cox and Hoby, the Baptist deputies, have published the narrative of their visit; in which they have, at considerable length, spoken in the defensive and explanatory style of their conduct on the other side of the Atlantic, knowing very well that the honest and resolute spirit of their English brethren would certainly recalcitrate against the timid manœuvres of their mission. I for one must express myself not a little satisfied that they have thus been put on their defence, and have been compelled in many speeches, not less than in their narrative, to elaborate an apology for the satisfaction of their brethren; for it is a proof that the English Baptists, in whose zeal we may generally place reliance, are as hearty as ever in the holy cause of abolition, which cannot be deserted by Christians in the present alarming crisis without bringing disgrace and judgment on the churches.

The first fact established by these repeated explanations is, that the deputies were as prescient and

cautious, as their constituents were thoughtless and imprudent; for it now appears that Doctors Cox and Hoby had fully made up their minds not to meddle with abolition, *before they left this country*; that they had duly considered all the danger and difficulty of taking the bull of slavery by the horns, and were determined to go through the Union quietly and comfortably, in the worshipful style of ambassadors, undisturbed by the heat and dust of "agitation." This is evident; 1st, from the following passage in the Narrative, "My colleague and I were not pledged by any expressed or understood engagement to attend the anniversary of the Anti-Slavery Society. The document with which we were entrusted, and by which we were sent to America, abstained from all allusions to the subject of slavery, expressly that we might go unfettered, and act according to our judgment in any emergency," (p.113); and, 2dly, from the following passage in a speech of Dr. Cox, before the Baptist Union, held in London last June, "That letter* was not given to the deputation in character of instructions, for *the last* declaration which I uttered to the committee, before leaving them, was this, that if they would not place confidence in the ability and zeal of the delegates, *even at the eleventh hour*, let them choose others in whom they could entirely confide."

The committee ought not to have fallen into this snare, they ought to have answered the deputies to this effect, "Your declaration at *the eleventh hour* does, indeed, surprise and perplex us, for it is manifest to us that if you had not secretly determined not to act according to these instructions, you never would or could have made this demand for what you call our entire confidence,—confidence we, indeed, have placed

* Alluding to a well written letter of instructions which the deputies thus cleverly set aside.

in you as brethren and as Christians, and for that very reason have selected you to bear our testimony against the enormous sin of slavery, believing that you would, without fear or favour, make the English churches speak the language of truth, justice, mercy, and evangelical morality. It never can have been a secret to you that the task is a difficult one, and such as cannot be executed without giving great offence, even as it once was a very dangerous task to preach the gospel in this country; but such has been our unlimited confidence in your characters, that we never have doubted for a moment your ability and wish to undertake the task, and that without reserve or hesitation: for we cannot consent that our deputies should march through the length and breadth of the United States and not divulge to all the world that we English Protestants have a hatred and horror of slavery, which in professing Christians is inexpressibly detestable and intolerable, and cannot be retained without bringing a dreadful opprobrium on the holy body of Christ. This is a message which our deputies must publicly deliver, it is part of that great and glorious truth that God is light and in him *is no darkness at all*; let other religions play at hide and seek with sin, we dare not do so; we must not retain a wedge of Achan, for if we do the axe will be laid to our roots, and with that wedge we shall be split up for the burning. If the Americans are given to prayer and preaching, and yet keep their brethren, God's sable children, in bondage, their prayer is sin, their sermons are condemnation; and you, as our deputies, must go and tell them so, and if they will not hear you, then shake the dust of your feet against them; for it shall be more tolerable, far more tolerable, to Sodom and to Gomorrah than to them and their cities if they reject your word.

“To ask for ‘our unlimited confidence in your zeal and abilities,’ therefore, and to reject this letter as

your instructions, is a proof to us that you do not intend to act by them, for if you did, you would not make the demand. True it is *the eleventh hour*, and all is ready, and you have kept secret your views up to the eleventh hour, but rather than entrust our mission to persons whose caution is so painfully conspicuous, we shall defer this ambassage till we can find persons who, without reserve, will indeed take our letter as their instructions."

The Deputies, however, sailed without any instructions; "unlimited confidence" was placed in their "zeal and abilities," which terminated in very evident aversion to the cause of abolition, and very evident liking to the Colonization Society,—that Society which possesses irresistible attractions for all those who are ashamed of seeming to oppose emancipation, and who fear or dislike the monster abolition.

Dr. Cox has very plainly confessed that these were his feelings; for of the Abolition Society he uses these words, "respecting which we entertained *serious doubts*;" but of the Colonization Society he says, "*we did not wholly disapprove it.*"—(p. 103.) This is bad enough; but Dr. Hoby, who of course is included in the "WE" of the words just cited, has for himself *

* In giving Dr. Hoby's words from the Narrative, it is to be observed, that they are printed precisely as he has sent them forth to the world: The obscurity of the sentences is his and not mine.

"At this interview Mr. Thompson clearly intimated, that my opinion in favour of compensation, not as proposed in Britain, but on loss being actually proved to be sustained by a change of legislation, and, also in favour of forming a black republic on the slave coast of Africa, apart from all that is objectionable in the American Colonization Society, were the reasons why, as he said to me, 'we did not want you.' To this it could only be replied, 'Then why include me in the censure?' Mr. Thompson was aware, before he left England, that these were the views entertained, I and it is to be regretted that such opinions are never admitted in the discussions of American abolitionists."—p. 108.

taken the trouble to inform us, that his idea of abolition is coupled with compensation, and a new Liberia, which he calls "a black republic on the slave coast of Africa;" that is, money for the slave-drivers, and a black republic to receive three millions of persecuted men and women, who are to be exiled from their native land to appease the hatred of their persecutors. Dr. Hoby, indeed, says that his republic is to be "apart from all that is objectionable in the Colonization Society;" but how that is to be effected is not set forth, for it is as if he were to invent "a new species of gout apart from pain,"—"a new sort of affliction apart from sorrow." He that cherishes a scheme of wholesale banishment "apart from all that is objectionable," has either grossly deceived himself, or calculates with too great confidence on the credulity of mankind.

It is, however, satisfactory to observe that the American abolitionists have, in the vestibule of their agitation, repudiated* all ideas of "compensation;" for not only is such a plan scandalously unjust and iniquitous, but we have seen its evil working too clearly in our own West Indian Colonies ever to desire the repetition of such an experiment.

The ambassage of the English Baptists having been unwarily entrusted to deputies entertaining unsound sentiments, it is no wonder that the mission was one of mere compliments and congratulations, and that Chris-

* Declaration of the National Anti-Slavery Convention.—Philadelphia, Dec. 1833. . . . "We maintain that no compensation should be given to the planters emancipating their slaves, because it would be a surrender of the great fundamental principle *that man cannot hold property in man*,—because slavery is a crime, and therefore is not an article to be sold,—because the holders of slaves are not the just proprietors of what they claim,—because if compensation be given at all, it should be given to the outraged and guiltless slaves, and not to those who have plundered and abused them."

tian Heralds, solemnly sent forth from the churches, passed through the land of bondage, without once lifting up their voice against a sin, of which no parallel is to be found in all the gloomy records of ecclesiastical history.

We have nothing to do with the private acts of the deputies; they may, and, I believe, did, express themselves against slavery in their social intercourse with their slave-driving "brethren;" they could not but open their mouths in reproof when they were sitting under the same roof with "dear and reverend brothers," who notoriously bought and sold Christian slaves; they *did* expostulate with these wicked men, and pointed out the enormity of selling men and women, with whom the sellers were in the habit of partaking of the eucharistic table; but as for any public ambassadorial acts they were totally silent, and have carefully suppressed in their narrative many of those instructive instances of "Christian" oppression and villainy with which they became personally acquainted.* And this is called prudence! and Dr. Cox has printed letters from American ministers in approbation of his *judicious conduct*, which these gentlemen declare "will raise him high in the esteem of the wise and good of all parties," (p. 123), and "make him stand forth in bold relief when contrasted with the egregious folly of his countrymen"!!!

What, then, have the English Baptists gained by their unfortunate mission? Hear it from Dr. Cox's

* One sentence only in the Narrative inadvertently confesses the guilt of the American churches.—"Those who commissioned us knew perfectly well that our American brethren were **LARGELY IMPLICATED IN SLAVE HOLDING.**" (p. 117.)—These few unguarded words are worth many chapters of the Narrative; for it acknowledges a fact which we might in vain look for amidst long descriptions of chapels, prayer-meetings, colleges, and revivals.

own words, uttered before the Baptist Union, "No man in America doubted of the Baptist churches in England being abolitionists; nothing that the deputation had ever said or done would have produced the impression that they were *not* abolitionists."

Dr. Cox did not venture to assert that he and his coadjutor had done anything to make it believed that the English Baptists were really abolitionists. No—that would have been too audacious; all he asserts is that they had done nothing "to produce the impression that they were NOT abolitionists." They did not contradict a negation; that is, they did nothing at all on the subject; they wrapped up their talent in a napkin, and restored it to its owners clean and unused.

And true it is that no man doubted that the English Baptists were abolitionists; but that is not the question; the question is, whether the English Baptists were determined to grapple with the crime in a Christian warfare. No one doubts that a seventy-four gun ship is a man of war; but the question is, will that man of war *fight*? Will it come forth and bombard the enemy, or are all its guns spiked, and are orders given that it shall by no means go out to sea? If the English Baptists keep their abstract hatred of slavery locked up in their own bosoms, as an esoteric secret of the sect, they are, to all intents and purposes, not abolitionists; and this is exactly the position they have been compelled to assume by the policy of their deputation, which, in my opinion, had far better never have left the shores of England. To talk of love and piety, and revivals, and camp meetings, and of having "formed a link of connexion between the Baptist churches of America and England," (p. 117); and to boast that the deputies have succeeded in "calling forth the kindest emotions, the warmest affections, the loveliest spirit towards THEMSELVES, towards England,

and *mankind*," (i.e. slaves and people of colour always excepted) p. 72, is surely making a very poor estimate of the right feelings of the English Baptists; for may they not most justly complain that they do not wish to be "linked" with these slave-drivers: that to be bound up in the bundle of life with them is any thing but desirable, lest they, too, should be brands with them for the burning; and that their object in sending the deputation was not merely to pay compliments and number the strength of a sect, but to ascertain the truth of those frightful reports which had been wafted across the Atlantic to our shores; and then by all the bowels of mercy in Jesus Christ our Lord, by all the tenderness of the God and Father of Jesus Christ, to implore in a public, solemn, serious and holy message, that these professed disciples of the righteous Jesus would, at last, awake to righteousness and sin not.

I will not here stop to untwist the puzzle of casuistry which Dr. Cox has fabricated about "the political question of slavery;" for I feel confident that any plain intellect can master the sophism, nor will I lengthen this letter by decyphering the complaint against "foreign interference, and foreigners," (i.e. Mr. George Thompson,) repeatedly urged in the pages of the *Narrative*; these are arguments such as might be expected from persons who "do not wholly disapprove of the Colonization Society." But I hasten to conclude this protracted subject, by a passage extracted from the *Patriot* newspaper, well written, by an old and faithful advocate of the slave. "The peculiar aggravation of American slave-holding is *not* that it is the sin of the Federal government, and, therefore, implicating the whole nation, who are pledged by the terms of union to be partakers by more than connivance, in the sin of the slave-holding States; not that it is a national sin, so much as that it is, in America,

THE SIN OF THE CHURCH. This is the horrible fact which renders even our fraternizing with slave-holding churches, and slave-flogging pastors, a questionable, or, at least, an embarrassing position. That slavery existed in the southern States we always knew; but the extent to which Presbyterian, Baptist, and Wesleyan churches were directly implicated in upholding the system, was not by any means generally understood in the country till very recently. That slaves were *the property of churches* was not even dreamed of. How could it be supposed that while the northern States were glorying in having abolished slavery,—no great surprise to virtue, however, as slave cultivation is confessedly a very unprofitable sin in such latitudes,—the very churches of the middle and southern States were trafficking in the blood and sinews of their dark-skinned fellow-countrymen and fellow-Christians? Where is the dissenting church in the three kingdoms that could for a single day tolerate this ineffable outrage upon the members of Christ's body."—(June 22, 1836.)

To this passage may be added one more by the same writer, I presume, in the "Eclectic Review;" to which it will be quite unnecessary for me to add one word.

"The time is come when it behoves British Christians to lift up their voice in loud and emphatic reprobation of the wickedness in which all religious denominations in the United States are more or less involved, — to make the voice be heard across the Atlantic in the language of firm, uncompromising remonstrance. It is high time to bring the whole force of public sentiment in this country to bear upon the unjust and unchristian prejudices which steel the professed followers of Christ against the plainest dictates of his word, and to give *the utmost support of our*

sympathy and encouragement to the noble band who, alive to their country's shame and danger, are striving to diffuse a better feeling through the American community.

“It seems to us that the truth of the Christian religion is implicated in the issue of the struggle of principles in the United States.” — August, 1835; No. lxxx.

LETTER XXI.

THE society of Wesleyan Methodists is well worthy the attention of the historian and the philosopher, not less than of the Christian theologian; for the progress of this famous society will furnish not only a most important chapter in modern history, but will supply matter for deep inquiry to those philosophers who would find a solution for the moral changes of the human race in the movements of mental phenomena.

My subject requires of me to notice Methodism only in one view,—its present tendency to advance the kingdom of Christ upon earth, and to mitigate the abundance of evil which everywhere prevails. With this view, then, let us first make all due acknowledgment to Methodism as a benefactor, and cheerfully confess that England and America owe an immense debt of gratitude to the illustrious founder of this powerful society; and that the loss of Methodism would be a very great loss to the whole world; for we cannot but believe and hope that the efforts of this zealous sect will be crowned with increasing success, and that they have but, as yet, laid the foundation for the future good to be achieved by their exertions..

Let us who are Calvinists,* and that, too, of the rigid

† I do not here intend to include my friend to whom these Letters are addressed, but those Calvinists who, though now decidedly in the minority, would appeal to Dr. Owen as a sound expositor of their creed. In that minority I rank myself.

school, cast away our Gomerian telescope, when we would look at the world that lieth in wickedness, and, instead of viewing one or two favoured spots of our little creed, behold, with expanded view, all the kingdoms of the earth from the rising to the setting sun, oppressed with the powers of darkness, and condemned to hopeless bondage of sin and death, unless the armies of the church shall go forth to their rescue. With this view, unless our hearts be indurate with bigotry, we must bid God speed to Methodism; for we see what it has already done, and we know full well that much of the plentiful harvest would be lost, for want of efficient hands, if the Wesleyan labourers should retire from the field. Let us remember that, owing to Methodism, justification by faith, with the other fundamental doctrines of the gospel, are preached in many villages and towns of this kingdom, and in various portions of the old and new continents, which, without these preachers, would never hear a sound of the gospel. I do not say that all Methodist ministers preach the gospel, for some of them certainly do not; but, generally speaking, we have every reason to believe that wherever there is a Methodist chapel, there, sooner or later, and by reason of the frequent change of the preachers, the truth will be declared, and men will listen to the word of life. Let us remember the multitudes that have been brought by the labours of Methodism from a state of gross sensuality and brutal ignorance, not only to comparative virtue and knowledge, but to that frame of mind which takes a lively interest in the spread of the gospel all over the world. Calvinists may think the doctrine of Methodism deficient, or may perceive that some of the Wesleyan doctrines, by the inevitable deductions of sound logic, terminate in the mysteries of Brahminical absorption; but still, remembering the manifest good that has been done by this society, they must acknow-

ledge that the Almighty does not wait till Christians have adopted a perfect creed, and a perfect form of church government; but requiring only truth in the inward parts, and faith in Christ crucified as the Redeemer of sinners that turn to God through Him, and commit their souls' salvation to his grace,—sends down a liberal blessing on those who in all essentials thus seek to promote the glory of God through the Son of his love. And, indeed, unless we admit this to be a truth, we must at once confess that the church of Christ is nowhere upon earth, and that there is no salvation anywhere; for nothing can be more certain than this fact, that there is nowhere to be found a church of Christians which has a perfectly scriptural creed, together with a perfectly scriptural form of church government,—imperfection is amongst them all; but to all of them—to some more liberally than others—has been entrusted a measure of the seed of everlasting life, and it will be found, at last, that this seed has been sown by Episcopalian, Calvinistic dissenter, Methodist, and Quaker, and that the sun of righteousness has fructified the seed, without respect to the paltry barriers that now keep sects apart, and sadly prevent all interchange of brotherly communion. Merciful, indeed, is it for this miserable earth, that God in Christ is not a God of sects, but a God above sects, and that all who believe in the Lord our righteousness “have an access by one spirit unto the Father.”

On the other hand, however, if we look at Methodism in its human arrangements, we find it abounding with imperfections: its church-government is not framed according to any pattern authorized in Scripture: the Wesleyans do not pretend that their arbitrary oligarchy of priests resembles the order established in the primitive churches. The constitution of John Wesley is an edifice built up entirely by the imagination of man, and, in this respect, has no more claim to our reverence

than the fabric of Jesuitism or the government of the Papal hierarchy; it may be useful and clever, and to certain ends may wisely apply certain means, but this is all we can say of it, if we examine it either by the gospel or any decent code of morals; and it is extremely probable, that persons who understand the trick of government might contrive another constitution more clever and more artful than that which at present "feels along the line" of Wesleyan Methodism.

The master secret of the society is the consignment of a boundless power to an oligarchy of clergymen, whilst the people are allowed to play with the forms of power, in the reality of which they have no share. Conference is a camarilla of priests, who, with closed doors, make all the laws by which the society is regulated, and to the high prerogative of expulsion or suspension of any member of the society, add the still more important one of voting, levying, and applying all the taxes, without consulting the people. In other words, absolute power is vested in the hands of a self-elected oligarchy: a form of government the most arbitrary and powerful that can be imagined, as may be seen by comparing John Wesley's system with the now fallen government of the state of Venice.

With all this apparatus of dominion, there is, however, a large allowance of the forms and semblance of power to the people; they have their district meetings, class-meetings, stewards and leaders' meetings, and in various other ways are permitted to put forth their energies without opposition, so long as those energies are employed in a way agreeable to their masters. And it is this dexterous arrangement which makes Methodism popular with the multitude; for every one who has any desire to be active may immediately find a field for his activity by taking a part in the complicated business of his sect, and in some way or other may so occupy himself as to appear to his

own eyes, at least, of some importance. All the while, however, there is the jealous eye of authority anxiously watching the busy movements of the incorporated workmen, and if perchance they trench on forbidden ground, if they question a decree of Conference, if they demand any reform, or resist any ordinance of their superiors, or even, by remote tendency, seem to desire an enlargement of popular influence, immediately a stern and inexorable Superintendant quashes all their proceedings, and makes them feel that though Conference only sits once, and that for a short time, every year, yet it never slumbers nor sleeps so as to drop the sceptre which it received from John Wesley's hands. In vain is it for the remonstrants to battle out their cause, however clearly justice may be on their side, through all the various courts of appeal which Methodism seems to offer to its oppressed members;—some bar of authority, some interstice of the net of power, embarrasses them at every turn; and, at last, a grand and verbose epistle from Capreæ cuts off the remonstrants, as putrid limbs of the body, and consigns them to the dogs and sorcerers, who are for ever shut out of the walls of Wesleyan Methodism.

The instances of these unsuccessful struggles have, of late years, been so numerous in the Methodist Society, and have so uniformly ended with one catastrophe,—triumph and increase of power to the rulers, and defeat and heavier chains to the remonstrants,—that we may conjecture the experiment will never again be repeated. They that wish for reform in Methodism cannot hope to effect it but by altering the very constitution of the society. There is obviously but one remedy,—a change from the sacerdotal to the popular form of government, and that not according to the ingenious fancies of man, but according to the pattern discoverable in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul. Christians may not select constitutions

from the pigeon-holes of Abbé Seye's office; they may not amuse themselves with inventing this and that form of ecclesiastical polity, according as their prejudices preponderate for the regal, aristocratical, or popular pattern; they have the New Testament before them, and according to that book they must legislate, however much it may militate with the prejudices of their education or the decrees of their sect.*

To appeal to Conference on this subject, and to require them to renounce the exorbitant dominion which they at present enjoy, is evidently hopeless: we cannot reasonably expect that they could ever be persuaded to renounce their profitable prerogatives, or from lords and rulers to become "servants, and least of all;" nor can we expect them to heed those signs of deterioration which a tyrannical government must, sooner or later, exhibit, and which certainly are now discoverable by those who will take the trouble to look beyond the outward array of the society. The primitive simplicity of Methodism in this country is fast fading away,—the preachers are a different race of men from those who endured the persecution of the nascent state of the sect; many are beginning to talk about talent, and to set a high value on the ornamented

† The tyranny of Conference has produced various sects and epi-sects of Methodism, so many that it would be long to name them; but all of them, without exception, have adhered to the ideas the sect from which they have seceded. *To perfect John Wesley's platform* has been the aim of all the Methodistical seceders; hence amongst the Primitive Methodists, Kilhamites, Protestant Methodists, and others, we find the same machinery of a conference, class meetings, district meetings, stewards' and leaders' meetings, &c. &c., though there is not the slightest authority in Scripture for any one of these contrivances; a striking instance of the superstitious attachment of man to the sectarian notions in which he has been educated. It is, indeed, surprising that not one of the sects produced by the arbitrary power of Conference has ever taken up this opinion, that in seeking reform they ought to reform according to the New Testament rather than by the ideas of John Wesley.

and rhetorical style of pulpit oratory; the high tone and enormous prerogatives of Conference have too much exalted them, and the love of power increases with the increase of the whole body; wealth and influence, the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, have produced the usual harm amongst Methodists, and there is already a want of a second John Wesley amongst them, to preach against those secular corruptions which a profound ecclesiastical historian has declared could never yet be kept out of any body of Christians for forty years together.

In the large towns there are many Methodists who ought never to have been admitted into the body; their lives and occupations do little credit to Christians, and it would be a strange mistake to *take it for granted* that a Methodist is in these days a pious man. The language of piety is, perhaps, familiar with them all; but, alas! there are too many whom it is painful to contemplate as the members of any Christian community. This evil is to be traced to an undue anxiety for increasing the numbers of the sect,—an anxiety which late rebellions and concussions have excited amongst the rulers. There is, apparently, a wish amongst them to present the imposing spectacle of a vast multitude of partizans arrayed on the side of Conference; for on no other theory can I account for the influx of numerous members in certain places, who surely do no credit to Methodism, and who, in the opinion of some of the stricter of the sect, ought never to have been admitted. This is an evil produced by a vicious government; if there were no fears at the seat of authority, there certainly would be less anxiety to swell the regiments of the society, and by numerical force to overpower resistance and awe into submission.

In the meantime, however, amidst much that is objectionable, good is always somewhere in progress

amongst the Methodists; they have many strifes, many rebellions, much oppression,—their acts of religious worship are sometimes very extravagant,* but still on the main, a fair portion, perhaps a majority, of the ministers are pious men, desirous to do the whole work of evangelists, and to live and die for the glory of God; and, by their efforts, many sinners are, through divine grace, converted, and turned from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God: and many there are amongst the Methodists, at this present

* It is part of the policy of the Wesleyan government to allow the most unbounded latitude in the pulpit, and to tolerate occasionally the most wild and grotesque orators, whose doings could not possibly be imagined by any one that had not witnessed them. There are many really excellent preachers at present amongst the Wesleyans,—men of grave and sedate deportment, whom it is pleasing as well as profitable to hear, and whose style and manner could not possibly offend the most fastidious. On the other hand, there are some itinerant revivalists—men of no fixed location—who travel about the country to stir up the slumbering embers of zeal with the bellows of excitement. One of these persons, a man well known in his vocation, I once heard; but how shall I describe his sermon, his prayers, and his acts and deeds in the pulpit? The violence of his expressions, the mummery and buffoonery of his gesticulation, the drollery and broad farce of his stories, the excessive profaneness of his language, and the studied boorishness of his manners and dialect, produced an exhibition such as no mimic on the stage could, by an elaborate imitation, possibly caricature. Much of this man's scandalous harangue I wrote down, but need not print, for it can do no good to publish proofs of a distorted religion and a depraved taste. A stormy and uproarious prayer meeting followed the sermon—a very tumult of devotion—in which the respectable inhabitants of a large town seemed to take a part. Surely scenes like these can have no other tendency than to turn religious worship into a comedy. I believe, however, that the Conference-clergy, the standing army of Methodism, much disapprove these episodes of excitement, and would gladly prohibit them, but for fear of the murmurs and discontent of the people. As long as “revivals” are cherished amongst the Ranters, and the other seceders from Methodism, it would be an impolitic measure to prohibit them in the Parent Society.

time, who are examples to all of sincerity, devotion, humility and love.

Much has been said of late of the tendency of the Methodists to unite with the church of England, and to support it in the day of its troubles; the church clergy seem to desire this union with all their hearts; but the Methodists never could hearken to such a scheme, for they know full well that such union could not take place without making large concessions to the pride and ambition of the prelates. To unite with an episcopal government can mean nothing else than to profess obedience to Bishops; and it is well known that no persons love power more than our English Bishops, unless, indeed, we except the clergy of the Wesleyan conference. It never can be supposed for a moment that Conference would allow prelatical fingers to meddle with the machinery of their sect; and, indeed, what can be conceived more ridiculous than his grace the Lord Archbishop of York, metropolitan of England, amidst the pomp and glitter of Bishopthorpe, holding counsel with his chaplains about love-feasts and band-meetings, or driving in his coach and six to a camp-meeting on the Wolds! Will, then, the Bishops yield to Conference or Conference to the Bishops? In what possible way can this union be effected but by altering the form of church government on one side or the other? In America,* where they have the world before them to make their choice, the Methodists and Episcopalians keep wide apart,—there is no sort of union between them; the supposition of such a catastrophe is, therefore, quite absurd, and is only entertained by those terrified clergymen who are ready to catch at any straw in the hour of difficulty.

* The tendency of Methodism to swallow up the Episcopalian sect may be seen in America, where the Methodists, a sect of yesterday, are 668,000 in number; whilst the Episcopalians, the sect of ancient authority, are only 60,000!

But let not the clergy deceive themselves; they ought to discover this truth, that the Methodists are in reality far more injurious to the prelatical fabric than the dreaded Independents and Baptists. They ought to perceive that Methodism, particularly in the northern manufacturing districts, spreads with astonishing rapidity amongst the people, in the proportion of three to one, perhaps, compared with the Calvinistic dissenters, and that he is who is joined to Methodism is irretrievably lost to the church,—that he goes no more to church,—that he separates himself from the church clergymen,—that he owns new rulers, joins himself to a new people, and loses all love and esteem for that system which is dear in the eyes of a clergyman. The internal arrangements of Methodism naturally create an extreme distaste for the church of England; for in the one all is excitement, bustle, activity, and mutual help; whilst in the other, all is cold formality, inaction, supineness, and neglect. A poor Methodist feels that in his own sect he is a living member, but in the church of England he is as little regarded as the bench on which he sits; he comes and goes to hear sermons and the reading of printed prayers, but this is all; and when the ceremony of worship is concluded he is forgotten, neglected, and despised. I have, consequently, ever observed that the poorer class of Methodists have an insurmountable dislike to the church of England; not, indeed, on the grounds assumed by an Independent,—not on the sound and wholesome argument of the Lollards and Puritans, but from personal dislike and disgust to that which, by experience, they have discovered to be highly unpalatable. Now, as Methodism sweeps in the poorer class into its capacious net, by vast shoals at a time, it is easy to perceive that it is rapidly undermining the church of England, and that every newly-built Wesleyan chapel is, in fact, a newly-mounted canon to bombard the establishment.

In the meantime, however, because the Methodistical rulers will not allow their people to take any part in the great controversy between the church and the dissenters, and rigidly enforce the strictest neutrality, the clergy are led to believe that the Methodists are anxious to unite with the church; and they too often express this opinion with an eagerness that betrays the vividness of their apprehensions. For who does not perceive, that this eagerness for an impossible union is, in fact, a confession of deplorable weakness on the part of the church, and that they who, but a few years ago, preached and printed against the Methodists, and incited mobs to pull down their chapels, could not now be coaxing and flattering them, unless they perceived their own alarming predicament, which renders assistance acceptable from any quarter? If the clergy of the establishment could annihilate the question of church reform, we may be quite sure that their next desire would be to annihilate the Methodists.

The rulers of Methodism have, of course, from the very first, perceived the secret of this ridiculous friendship, proferred to them by their old persecutors; and it is apparent, by occasional sneers and sly remarks in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, that the camarilla secretly enjoys the perplexity of the dominant sect.

The fact is, that Conference perceives the signs of decadence in the established church; it expects, as all other classes of society do, the downfall of the establishment, and is wisely resolved to observe a strict neutrality in the workings of this great catastrophe. The Methodists could not begin a warfare against the church, without materially perplexing and impeding the smooth course of their own affairs; for if Conference were to allow their people to meddle with the inflammatory matter of church reform, they could not

be surprised to see their own house taking fire in the progress of the warfare.

“*Nam tua res agitur paries quum proximus ardet.*”

It would be an act of insanity in the rulers of Methodism to allow their vast body, which, even now, is with much difficulty kept within bounds, to agitate such questions as are of necessity involved in a controversy with the church; for who does not see that if once they were permitted to attack priests, tithes, church rates, and the arbitrary power of the clergy, and to investigate the scriptural foundations of the establishment, that they must of necessity go a step farther, and conclude that Conference itself is a mere usurpation and an invention of man's artifice? It is, therefore, the obvious policy of Conference to avoid this controversy, and we need not be surprised to see them expelling, without mercy, those members or ministers who have temerarily handled the burning coal of “church and state.” Conference stands as much in need of conservative management as the church of England itself; the Wesleyan rulers are wise in their generation, and thoroughly understand the art of avoiding what is dangerous, as well as of adopting what is politic.

In spite, however, of this extreme caution and vigilant forethought on the part of Conference, it is probable that they will ultimately be compelled to admit the people to a just and moderate share of power, and to yield to force that which they have hitherto pertinaciously refused to concede to reason; for it is difficult to suppose that so many myriads of freemen will continue blindly to obey three or four hundred preachers, and to consign, without question, their consciences, their liberties, and their purses to a self-elected body

of irresponsible priests. We ought all to wish for a change, or rather a revolution, in the government of Methodism, and desire to see the day when the present state of things shall be completely remodelled according to a scriptural pattern; for then this powerful society would become more powerful, and, purged of the evils which a vicious government has introduced, would, with unimpeded efforts, assist in advancing the kingdom of Christ upon earth.

I close this Letter with an extract from the Methodist Magazine for May, 1836, which will sufficiently manifest the disinclination of the Wesleyan managers to enter into the schemes of the church clergy. In commenting on "the Pastoral Epistle from his Holiness the Pope, to some members of the university of Oxford," the editor makes the following remarks: "It is well known that within the last few years, a series of tracts, professedly adapted to the present times, has emanated from Oxford, defending the claims of what is usually understood by high churchmanship, and embodying principles respecting *apostolical succession*, ministerial authority, the power of the sacraments, &c., which ill accord with either the letter or the spirit of Protestant Christianity, and which exclude from the pale of the church of Christ, and all hope of salvation, *a large proportion of the best men in the land*. It is a bad sign when ministers lay great stress upon an assumed 'succession' from the apostles, *which not one of them can prove*, and overlook the great and attainable qualifications of apostolical piety, self-denial, zeal, and humility. We should be glad to see the *boasted* sons of the apostles imitating Peter and John at Jerusalem, and Paul at Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth, Antioch, and Rome."

It is presumed that after this passage the British

Magazine will cease to pay its monthly compliments to the Methodists, as “a highly respectable body.”*

* From the *Falmouth Packet*, Oct. 1836. “During the recent progress of Bishop Phillpotts through Cornwall, a circumstance occurred at St. Ives, which has occasioned a very strong sensation in the town. The Rev. J. Malkin, a clergyman of respectable character, curate of St. Ives, went to meet the bishop, as was his duty, at Laland. His lordship, having listened to secret accusers, told the reverend gentleman, that he had a serious charge to make against him, for he had been credibly informed, that he (the curate of St. Ives) *was in the habit of attending the conventicle*. To this the curate replied, he had not been in a conventicle for the last two years. His lordship then said, that he had been informed that his wife and family went to those places. The curate rejoined, that he could not dictate to his wife, or prevent her occasionally attending a Methodist meeting, if she felt inclined to do so. The bishop then expressed himself to this effect: ‘if you cannot command your wife and family, sir, not to visit such places, you are not fit to be a minister of the establishment.’ The curate, thus publicly addressed by his diocesan, indignantly replied, ‘My Lord, I received this gown from your lordship’s hands, and I now return it to you without a blemish.’—The inhabitants of St. Ives have subscribed a handsome piece of plate to be presented to their ejected curate.”

Here, then, we see the total failure of the projected union between the Prelatists and Methodists! This notorious Bishop is one of those who have said much about the necessity and comeliness of this union, and yet, behold, he ejects a curate from the ministry, because the curate’s wife attends the Methodist meeting! How many Methodist meeting-houses would the Bishops allow to darken their dioceses if they had the power of pulling them down?

In other respects this story may serve to shew the church of England in its true light. What a doleful church must that be in which such things can be done with impunity!

LETTER XXII.

A HIERARCHY framed on despotic principles cannot fail to produce priests attached to despotism—men for whom force and injustice have more powerful attractions than the claims of the helpless and distressed. An attentive consideration, therefore, of the constitution of Methodism would naturally lead one to expect that the Wesleyan conference must have a tendency to engender clergymen of despotic predilections—and such is the case; for it will generally be found that the Wesleyan clergy range themselves on the side of power, when any striking event elicits their political principles, and that their feelings and affections are decidedly in favour of that policy, which, in a very suspicious nomenclature, is dexterously called “conservative.” Arbitrary maxims are congenial with their taste: the illustrious founder of their sect went out of his way to write against the emerging liberties of North America; and the clergy, who now occupy his chair, are not a whit the less advocates of a strong, and, if need be, of a violent government. The Wesleyans have a strong government in their own house, and they admire one wherever else they can find it.

The parliamentary investigation of last session, instituted for the purpose of inquiring into “the Caffre war, and the death of Hintza,” has brought to light the curious fact, that the Wesleyan missionaries of

Southern Africa have been the zealous promoters and secret counsellors of some of the most objectionable acts of an evil government which, through it, has perpetrated mighty wrongs on an afflicted and prostrate nation, does not seem to have accomplished all the dreadful wishes of one, at least, of these belligerent missionaries. Lord Glenelg, in his admirable despatch to Sir Benjamin D'Urban, a governor of dismal celebrity, notices * that "Messrs. Shrewsbury and Boyce, the Wesleyan missionaries, have, in an address signed by themselves for the whole Wesleyan body (of the Cape), *supported the measures of the colonial government, and pronounced an unqualified condemnation on the Caffres.*" His Lordship, however, very significantly intimates that "the tone and character of that address" do not give it much weight in his mind, evidently meaning that he thinks it discreditable to the authors. And well he may, for this address of the missionaries is marked with the usual injurious calumnies against the natives,† ascribing all manner of crimes to them, and all manner of virtues

* "Caffre-war and Death of Hintza"—*Parliamentary Returns*, No. 279. Lord Glenelg's despatch cannot be praised too highly. It is a masterly comment on the last scene of that long tragedy which we have been acting in Southern Africa. The concluding sentence of the despatch is an unrivalled specimen of bitter irony. "I am persuaded that your sentiments fully concur with my own on the general principle on which these instructions are founded, and it affords me much gratification to know that as you have been called to the discharge of severe and unwelcome duties, *so now the more agreeable task will devolve upon you of carrying into effect his majesty's gracious intentions*, which I have the honour of communicating to you in this despatch!"

† "We know, in common with our countrymen, that the Caffres *were themselves the aggressors*; and that they most wantonly, cruelly, and ungratefully commenced this war, with a people WHO SOUGHT AND DESIRED THEIR WELFARE AND PROSPERITY!!!"—*Address signed by Messrs. Boyce and Shrewsbury.*

to the colonists ; but omitting to trace the origin of the war, or to point out those frightful acts of violence and injustice which have been long stimulating the miserable Aborigines to attempt reprisals on their oppressors.

It would have been well, however, if these reverend gentlemen had restricted themselves to the courtly task of penning addresses to the colonial government ; for one of them, Mr. Shrewsbury, appears, in the parliamentary returns, as the counsellor of measures so violent, as to startle even Sir Benjamin D'Urban.

“ It may not be irrelevant,” says the Governor, in a dispatch to the Colonial Office, dated June, 1835, “ to cite the opinion of *a most benevolent and humane clergyman*, Mr. Shrewsbury, chief of the Wesleyan mission in the colony, long resident amongst the Caffres, &c. Although the author of this opinion is *a man of peace and religion*, a teacher of the gospel, and, as all who know him will vouch, in every regard a most pious and exemplary christian minister, *I think my measures are not quite so severe* as those which he, in his conscience, considers necessary *and openly recommends.*”

After this official testimony to Mr. Shrewsbury's benevolence, humanity, and piety, we should hardly be prepared to hear, that he transmitted in January, 1835, to Colonel Smith, a paper containing his own private plan for dealing out justice to the Caffres. This plan is drawn up in six articles, which, excepting only the six articles of Henry VIII., are unparalleled in the history of oppression.

Article 1. “ The chiefs who have invaded the colony to forfeit their chieftainship, their arms, and their property ; this accomplished, the righteousness of British law, and the equity of British judges *may decide the rest.*” In other words the native Princes are to be deprived of their power and dignity (Peers ousted of their peerage and robbed of their estates) ; the people

are to be driven out of their country, their lands to be seized, and all their arms and personal property to be taken away from them : and then when this shall have been fully accomplished, “ the righteousness of the law ” comes in as a sort of holy bezom to sweep all clean, if, indeed, any thing should remain to be swept away after such wholesale pillage and devastation. The reverend missionary seems, however, to have had in view a special commission of judges to be sent on a penal tour into Caffraria ; for certain it is, that “ the righteousness of the law and of the judges ” must be something peculiarly terrific from the pen of such a writer

Article 2. “ Deserters from the British government, who may have taught the Caffres the use of arms, *to be punished with rigour :* ” which is, being interpreted, to be hanged or shot.”

Article 3. “ The actual murderers of British subjects to be everywhere demanded, and when obtained *executed on the spot**, that the Caffres may see that murder with Britons is an unpardonable crime. Every chieftain to be informed that if he substitute innocent persons for the really guilty, the chieftain himself will forfeit his own life, *as being himself the friend of mur-*

* Mr. Shrewsbury’s suggestions seem not to have been thrown away on Sir B. D’Urban ; for three months afterwards we find him in his ultimatum to Hintza, the unhappy chief of the Caffres thus expressing himself :—“ I demand that the murderer of William Purcell be immediately brought to the condign punishment of death by the Caffre authorities, *and in presence of commissioners whom I shall appoint to witness the execution*, and to whom Hintza will cause to be delivered 300 head of good cattle, for the benefit of the widow and family of the murdered man.” A subject of Hintza murders (it is said) a British subject ; Hintza is commanded to execute the offender, whether he can find him or not, and, in addition to pay 300 oxen for an offence committed by one of his subjects ! how many oxen shall be paid for the murder of Prince Hintza ?

derers, and the cause of shedding innocent blood, under the colour of land and justice."

They that know any thing of the weights and measures in the scales of Cape-town justice, will easily comprehend that an enquiry into "murder" would all be on one side—that such an inquisition would be terrible to the Caffres, who, in a war of reprisals, have fought for their lands, houses, cattle, and people, violently taken away from them by Christian oppressors, but that none of the Colonial felons would be called to give an account of their enormities. If murder is "an unpardonable crime" with Britons, how many of the English settlers would not now be food for the vultures of the region? if there must be a diligent inquisition for blood, and if murder is never to be pardoned, who is to atone for the death of the Prince Hintza? who shall be executed to make an equal account for the blood of a voluntary hostage? how many hecatombs of oxen shall our guilty nation furnish as a penalty for so great a crime? nay, if the "friend of murderers" is to be excluded from mercy, what is to become of the author of the six articles?—"put up thy sword into the sheath: he that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword!"

The author of the six articles is, however, an amateur of executions; "they are to be executed on the spot." The landscape is to be ornamented with executions,—the gibbet is to give visible proof of our "righteousness,"—the gallows ever in pastoral retreats are to shew that we know not how to forgive.

In the 6th article there are two clauses which I leave as I find them, for it would be quite superfluous to comment on the cruel and vindictive spirit they exhibit. "Caffre offenders, *whose lives may be spared*, to be employed in making high-roads in every part of Cafferland; if necessary, even to Port Natal; their labour as convicts being a visible proof of the punish-

ment *mercifully inflicted on those who might have lost their lives*. A universal registration of Caffres to be effected, every man wearing on his own neck *a thin plate of tin*, containing his name, and the name of his chief."

It is but justice to the Wesleyan body, after such a shocking exhibition of premeditated violence to record the following animadversions of the committee of the Wesleyan missions on the conduct of Mr. Shrewsbury: "The committee feel themselves painfully, but imperatively compelled by a sense of public duty to record their most entire and unqualified disapprobation of the steps unhappily taken by Mr. Shrewsbury on this occasion. They judge that the advice given by him to the commander of the forces, then about to proceed against the Caffre invaders of the colony, if understood in its obvious and literal meaning, was, in various particulars, most unwarrantable, and revolting to the feelings of humanity and religion; and even if it were possible, for a moment, to suppose that any circumstances would have justified such recommendations as he gave, it was still highly unbecoming the station and character of a minister of the gospel of peace; and contrary to the standing instructions which this society gives to all its missionaries, that he should interfere at all, even though requested by the military authorities, in the discussion of questions of this sort!" These are good and forcible words, but will they be followed up with measures suited to the occasion? and will the offending party meet with such discipline from the Conference, as may prove to all the world that the Wesleyans are determined to repudiate their emissaries who pervert the office of Evangelist?

Mr. Boyce, the assistant missionary, is, in this deplorable affair of the six articles, most happily isolated from his coadjutor. The articles are dated January 1835, but Mr. Boyce did not return to the colony from England till the month of February, so that he

is entirely exculpated from any knowledge even of Mr. Shrewsbury's letters to Colonel Smith. It is, however, abundantly in evidence by the publication of the parliamentary papers on "the Caffre war and death of Hintza," that Mr. Boyce is a promoter of that species of colonial policy which may be called *D'Urbanism*, for in these papers we have a document drawn up by the reverend gentleman, entitled "Miscellaneous Remarks on the State of the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony," as well as the address of thanks to Sir Benjamin D'Urban, signed by him and Mr. Shrewsbury. The former of these documents Sir Benjamin D'Urban quotes in despatch to the Earl of Aberdeen, with the following complimentary expressions to its author: "To this I also add the opinion of the Caffre character given by another *humane and very excellent clergyman*, Mr. Boyce, long resident in Caffre-land." After such a eulogy from so high a quarter, one cannot but be anxious to know the character of the Caffres as depicted by Mr. Boyce, and we find it to be this. "A Caffre chief knows of no restraint upon his desire for the property of his neighbours, except that which the want of power to seize and retain imposes on him."* A compliment for which the Caffre chiefs can never be sufficiently grateful, and which will, doubtless, never be forgotten by their nation as long as a Wesleyan missionary shall be located amongst them by the Cape-town bayonets.

Having thus seen the affectionate admiration which Sir Benjamin D'Urban professes towards the Wes-

* Another touch of Mr. Boyce's pencil produces somewhat a ludicrous effect. "The fact is," says he, "the Caffres are like other men, governed *by their sense of the best method of serving their own interests*." Had this remark been pointed at the clerical body, it would have been more intelligible than when applied to the Caffres, who unwisely barter their cattle for the trinkets with which we cheat them.

leyan missionaries, we have but to contemplate the tender love which the Wesleyan missionaries profess for Sir Benjamin D'Urban, and then this interesting picture of friendship will be complete. "Lamentable and distressing as the events of the Caffre war have been," say Messrs. Shrewsbury and Boyce, in their address to the Governor, "as well towards the Caffres themselves as the colonists, we are yet consoled with the reflection that so far as the colonial government is concerned, *it has been conducted in accordance with the principles of justice and mercy.* To your Excellency's fatherly care some of us are mainly indebted for the preservation of our lives; and the arrangements your Excellency made for our safety and comfort in the camp, and in travelling to the colony, *and the condescension which has marked your Excellency's intercourse with us,* whenever circumstances have rendered an interview with your Excellency necessary or desirable, all lay us under a lasting debt of gratitude which we feel cannot easily be repaired. May the God whom we serve reward your Excellency with his eternal love and favour."

Although we have it upon this high authority that the late war has been conducted on "the principle of justice and mercy," yet assuredly we, in England, who know nothing of the principles of *colonial* justice and mercy, must come to a totally different conclusion, for Sir Benjamin D'Urban, in summing up his exploits, in this terrible campaign, thus describes what he has done: "The loss of the Caffres during our operations against them amounts to four thousand of their warriors; ours, fortunately, has not, on the whole, amounted to one hundred, and of these only two are officers. There have been taken from them also, *besides the conquest and alienation of their country,* sixty-thousand head of cattle, almost all their goats, their habitations every where destroyed, and their

gardens and corn-fields laid waste: they have been therefore chastised NOT EXTREMELY BUT SUFFICIENTLY." And so think the missionaries; and this will enable us to form some idea of their "principles of justice and mercy." But we have still further evidence of the peculiar doctrines held by the missionaries; for Sir Benjamin D'Urban in his despatch to Lord Aberdeen, informs us that the "missionaries, not at all inaptly, compare the Caffres to wolves (which, in truth, they resemble very much), which, if they be caught young, may be brought (for their own interest and gratification in the matter) to an appearance of tameness, but which invariably throw it off, and appear in all their native fierceness of the woods, as soon as the temptation of blood and ravage, which never fail to elicit their natural ferocity, presents itself to their instinctive "thirst for it." At every turn, therefore, in this history of woe, we find the Wesleyan missionaries—we find them in private memorials calumniating the Caffres, and stimulating the angry passions of their enemies—we find them advocating the military system, and deprecating a reduction of the army as a great* calamity; we find one of them devising plans of sanguinary revenge, plunder, and servitude—we find the severe governor praising them as men of "benevolence, humanity, and piety"—we find that when the war is over, the missionaries hasten with an encouraging address to the governor, to assure him that the war has been conducted on the principles "of humanity and justice"—we find the missionaries comparing the Caffres to "wolves," and the governor

* "If on any reliance on the schemes of benevolent speculative men, some of whom never saw a Caffre,—or if from any expectations of economizing the colonial expenditure, the colonial government should make a serious reduction in the military force of the frontier, the consequences would be disastrous, *both to the Caffres and the Europeans.*"—*Boyce's Paper*, pp. 45.

joyfully embracing the simile, and enlarging it with all those touches of eloquence, in which his very scanty knowledge of the English grammar will allow him to indulge—in one word, we find the governor and the missionaries in full accord on this one point, that the Caffres ought to be visited with total ruin, and mutually rejoicing that a war, executed “on the principles of justice and mercy” has been followed by a happy peace—the silence of the grave, and the tranquillity of desolation!

It is evidently, then, high time for the Wesleyans at home to bestir themselves; there is a spot on the character of their missions which must be wiped away: it will not, it cannot, be allowed them to pass over this affair in silence: the Methodist people are abundantly docile and obedient to Conference, but still they are Englishmen, and as Englishmen they will not consent that the fountain of English liberality should be diverted from its intended course, to swell the ocean of colonial blood, or that the exertions of pious Christians should be made to strengthen the hands of the tyrant and the oppressor. We have committed crimes on an enormous scale in South Africa; our career has been prosecuted in treachery, rapine, and violence; we have used the arts of civilized life for the worst purposes, and have disgraced the name of Christians by our systematic injustice towards the helpless Aborigines, whom, in innumerable instances, we have circumvented by fraud, or overpowered by force. Latterly, however, it had been our hope that the missionaries were the friends of the natives, the sacred heralds of peace, to interpose the golden sceptre of the gospel between the oppressor and the oppressed; but the veil is withdrawn, and in that unhappy country we find even the missionaries the counsellors of injustice, and imbued with all the prejudices and antipathies of the ruling party. And now, alas! shall

not the tear of sympathy fall for the poor Caffres, whom our armies have driven from their homes and robbed of their property? and shall we forget that we have most cruelly taken from a pastoral people sixty thousand head of cattle,* together with *all* their goats, leaving them nothing in our tender mercies but the bare mountains over which to roam till famine shall terminate their sufferings? A whole nation has been reduced in a few months from a state of prosperity to utter irremediable ruin, and the work has been done by British Christians, and that work in the nineteenth century!

Every sincere friend of the missionary cause, then, must anxiously wish to see the Wesleyans roll away the reproach now fastened on them, by the publication of the parliamentary returns, as it is well known that on occasions of far less moment Conference can act with a vigor, promptitude, and decision, even greater than the case requires. Will they then put forth their wonted vigor on *this* occasion? This is a question not to be answered at present; but there are indications, already observable in the conduct of the ruling party, which would lead one to apprehend that the vote of censure, passed by the committee of Missions last December, was intended chiefly for the colonial office, and that they never meant to bring before the public their severe but most just condemnation of Mr. Shrews-

* Sir Benjamin D'Urban insisted on Hintza's delivering up fifty thousand head of cattle, in two instalments of twenty-five thousand: so that, even by his own shewing, the governor has taken away ten thousand more of the Caffre cattle than he could claim according to his own most unjust estimate. It happened, however, that the colonists for whom he was making this monstrous demand estimated their loss only at thirty thousand, one hundred and four head of cattle (Caffre-war, pp. 74). But who should be judge between Hintza and a victorious army?

bury ; for not only have they omitted to publish the transaction in their periodicals, but in a late number of the *Methodist Magazine* we find a vehement eulogy of their South African missionaries, written in a tone of anger which shews that the editor, at least, is fully resolved to meet the case with all its difficulties. The September number asserts largely that the Caffre chiefs and their people manifest “a passionate desire” for the return of the Wesleyan missionaries, whom they consider their “best and truest friends,” and that they are waiting for their benefactors with affectionate impatience ; “and this,” says the editor, exultingly, “is triumphant proof of the influence which our missionaries had acquired among the Caffres.” Here, however, the *Methodist Magazine* is unfortunately contradicted by the Parliamentary papers, in which Sir Benjamin D’Urban, the friend, patron, and eulogist of the Wesleyans, gives a very different account of the relations existing between the two parties, and on the authority, too, of the missionaries themselves. “The residence of the missionaries,” says the governor, “had become utterly useless to the interest of religion, *for they all acknowledged to me*, with the reluctance natural to such an admission, but with the expression of their sincere conviction, that in the course of their long and diligent labours, although they had been, as they hoped, successful in the conversion of many of the race of Hottentots and Fingoes, they could not flatter themselves that they had made a salutary impression *upon one of the race of Caffres*, and they not at all inaptly compare the latter to wolves,” &c. &c. &c.

Now this being a statement of the missionaries themselves to their great friend and patron, we cannot fail to believe it ; so that the case stands thus ; the missionaries all acknowledged, though reluctantly, to the governor, that they were utterly useless to the inter-

ests of religion amongst the Caffres—not one of whom they had been able to convert—that the Caffres were wolves, and like wolves should be treated,—and this, coupled with Mr. Shrewsbury's six articles, and the address of thanks on the conclusion of the war, is superabundant proof that the bonds of love and affection were as slender as could be well imagined between the missionaries and Caffres. The Caffres, moreover, on their part, have wit enough to distinguish friend from foe; they know well enough the politics of the Wesleyans, and they well understood that the governor and his friends esteemed them as wolves, and as wolves wished to hunt them down; what then can make them “passionately desire” the return of the missionaries just now? Is it that they may discourse with them concerning the six articles, the loss of sixty thousand head of cattle, the death of their favourite prince, and the slaughter of four thousand of their chosen warriors, and the universal ruin of their farms, houses, and gardens?

It is, therefore, no extraordinary degree of scepticism to disbelieve the statements of the Wesleyan periodicals; and till we hear this passionate longing of the Caffres, “for their best and truest friends,” authenticated by some testimony over which the Methodists have no influence, we may safely withhold our credence to that which, in the face of it, is ridiculous and improbable.

Having said so much of the Caffre war. I may be allowed to remark in conclusion, that to me, at least, there seems, in all the despatches in which it is described, a most undue display of self-applause and self-gratulation, not only from Sir Benjamin D'Urban, the commander-in-chief, but from the officers who executed his commands. A few specimens of their style

will suffice. "This enterprize" says major Dutton, "was as judiciously planned, as it was resolutely and successfully executed: the rapidity of the movement—the promptness and gallantry with which the enemy were attacked as soon as discovered, and the well conducted return to the camp with the whole of the enemy's cattle, (about twelve hundred head) has been alike remarkable, and do the greatest credit to Colonel Smith." Again, the same eulogist, in speaking of a marauding excursion of Colonel Somerset, in which he brought away three thousand of the Caffres' cattle, bursts out into a rapture, "*it is quite impossible* to speak too highly of the troops employed in this operation, their excellent discipline,—the correct precision,—the patient perseverance—the brilliant gallantry, &c. &c. &c. *are beyond all praise !*" and so Colonel Smith, by order of the commander-in-chief, writes much in the same way, and almost in the same words,—“excellent marching, patient endurance of fatigue,—persevering efforts,—brilliant gallantry, &c. &c. (pp. 30).

In another despatch Colonel Smith gives an account of the dark story of Hintza's death, in which he was himself deeply implicated, though the actual honour of slaughtering the Caffre prince was reserved to a Mr. Southey, who was afterwards twice publicly thanked by Sir Benjamin D'Urban. "I seized the *athletic* chief by the throat", says the valiant Colonel, as if *the athletic* form of Hintza enhanced his own courage ! and, again, "between three thousand and four thousand of *these most athletic* and daring savages were visible on the hills ready to take advantage of any opportunity." This is a novel way of amplifying the mighty deeds of British arms.

Nevertheless, all this absurd trumpeting and puffing of the colonial despatches, cannot prevent the Caffre war from appearing a most pitiful business on the part of the English. We mustered an army more than five

thousand strong, with all sorts of military furniture, great guns, &c.; the Commissariat department was most accurately studied, and the plans of war most cautiously laid. We then put to death four thousand Caffres. We burnt their villages, ruined their farms, and took away sixty thousand head of cattle; but of our own troops, we only lost twelve, and of these more than half by accidents, mismanagement, or want of discipline. This, therefore, is not a war, but a slaughter; nor can all the eloquence of the colonial despatches ever elevate the *Bellum Durbananum* into any thing more heroic or respectable than the onslaught of Ajax Mastigoferus against the sheep and oxen. "Brilliant," however, as are the military exploits of Sir Benjamin D'Urban, it appears the conqueror of "the athletic" cowkeepers could not help expressing his misgivings in the midst of his laurels and trophies; for, strange as it may appear, yet true it is, that the commander-in-chief felt some unseemly fears, even in the very car of victory;—and fears of whom? of a Dissenting minister, of an unarmed non-conformist preacher, whose spectre haunted him even at head-quarters: thus writes Sir B. D'Urban to Lord Aberdeen, "I am not aware that I can usefully add any thing in way of detail of what has passed; as, however, I have reason to believe that the important extension of the colonial boundary WILL BE ASSAILED BY DOCTOR PHILIP, and, *of course by the London Mission*, on the ground of injustice in itself, and very probably (since it is a party peculiarly liable to exaggeration in statement, where an object of theory is to be supported,) of *severity* in its execution. I think it may be right to inclose an address (that otherwise I should not have done,) which I have received from the whole body of Wesleyan missionaries, seven in number, all well versed on the subject, &c. &c. &c."

Thus we see a victor returning from the overthrow of a nation defends himself in anticipation from a Dissenting minister, and, to avoid his blows, hides himself behind seven methodist preachers! *Quantum mutatus ab illo Hectore!*

The thanks and gratitude of the oppressed, and the applause of all true philanthropists had already elevated Dr. Philip on a lofty pedestal; but it seems that even his enemies are made to lend a helping hand to his exaltation.

LETTER XXIII.

THE Quakers, who, for a century at least, have been allowed to enjoy the repose of their secluded and sequestered sect, undisturbed only by the annual pillage of the state-clergy, have lately been called on to abide the assault of controversy, and to defend the very fundamentals of their creed against a formidable muster of opponents. By some strange perverseness in their fortunes they have been charged with alarming heresies and dangerous tenets, in that very period of their history when they had visibly relinquished the primitive fanaticism of their society, and had, in various ways, silently amended much that was originally objectionable.

I cannot here enter into the controversy relating to their doctrine, farther than to state my conviction, that some of the original opinions of the Quakers not only tended to mysticism, but were the very exaltation of mysticism. It would be easy to shew, by large quotations from their sayings and writings of their early friends, that they taught doctrines subversive of the Christian religion; and that the master-key of their mysteries was to substitute *conscience* for Christ, and to make it appear that the voice of conscience is and always has been the true Christ, which bringeth salvation. Their enemies, who congregated against them, from all sects, made most of this heresy, and plainly charged them with infidelity, ranking them amongst

unbelievers, who deny Jesus Christ and the Scriptures. The violent external pressure of the surrounding sects frequently forced them to put forth statements, and make use of words, more consonant with the general belief of Christians; but they still clung to this inner secret of the initiated, that mankind may be saved by following the dictates of *conscience*, which, in their mysterious and hieroglyphical phraseology, they were pleased to term THE LIGHT and the SEED.

It is obvious, that this doctrine, if carried out into its fair deduction, overthrows the whole Christian system, turns the life and death of our Saviour into a useless story, abrogates justification by faith, and cancels the redemption. If the heathen may be saved by their conscience, then certainly it is needless to preach unto them, that man Jesus, who was born of a woman under the law, who was slain on mount Calvary, in the reign of the emperor Tiberius, and who, after his resurrection, was seen and handled by his disciples. The Quakers never, indeed, taught such a doctrine, plainly and without circumlocution; but in the heat of argument, they asserted that many of the heathen, such as Seneca, Cicero, and others, were saved by "the inward light," and thus really embraced the gospel. Their enemies who were determined to contemplate their opinions in the most unfavourable light, did not wait to see whether the Quakers believed the corollaries of their propositions, but took it for granted that they did, and condemned them without scruple, according to the deductions of logic. But poor frail man is, in his religious opinion, very careless of logic, and will resolutely adopt contradictory propositions without heeding the obstacle of a confutation: and thus it was with the Quakers; they held opinions which could not possibly be reconciled; they believed that mankind may be saved by obeying conscience; and yet they repudiated, with pious horror, the accusa-

tion continually brought against them, that they rejected Jesus Christ, who was born in the flesh of the Virgin Mary.—Hence, those who study the writings of the old Quakers will sometimes find them using the language of orthodoxy, and plain sense, but more frequently unfolding the interminable mazes of mysticism and allegorical obscurity.

Professing to be daily disciples of the Holy Spirit, and to know no other teacher, they did not admit the reading of the Bible in their religious meetings; nor allow the instructions of stated preachers and prepared sermons. They waited for the words of the Great teacher, through the mouths of his chosen servants, and whoever rose up to speak in the spirit, became to them a delegated teacher of the Lord. Hence men and women were ministers of the sect; for whosoever had received the word of utterance from the Lord of Life was a teacher of the truth. This doctrine cut up all forms of the priesthood by the roots; no priest could stand on such a foundation; for there could be no settled priesthood when the ministry depended not on any choice, preparation, or appointment of man, but simply on the divine appointment, manifested by a spiritual illumination and gift of teaching. Hence the Quakers denied the lawfulness of any settled body of priests or ministers according to their ordinary ideas, and denounced those priests or ministers who receive money from their flocks, as “hirelings” condemned by the Scriptures.

Now, though their enemies charged them with all manner of infidel tenets, yet it seems pretty clear that the exasperating doctrine of Quakerism was the attack on a paid ministry; and I cannot doubt, that if they took as much pains now as they did at the beginning to propagate this “heresy,” they would be as much hated, reviled, and abused by all sects, as in the days of their tumultuous youth.

No sect that ever appeared in the world has met with a larger share of hatred and persecution than the Quakers. They were the Ishmaelites of Christendom : every man's hand was against them, and, in a certain sense, their hand was against every man ; for their doctrine and church government were such as to give a mortal offence to every Christian society then existing. The calumnies heaped upon them by the Puritans, themselves no small sharers in the portion of persecution, exceed all bounds. The most spiritual writers of the old Calvinistic school cannot let the name of Quaker pass, without some bitter expression of contumely and scorn ; and they were, in the full sense of the word, " the off-scouring of all things." And yet, in all this mighty storm of hatred and abuse, it is evident, to a distant observer, that John Fox and his disciples were benefactors of the human race, and the propagators of many precious truths, which, though sown in blood and nurtured in tempests, will not be lost, but will fill the earth at last with fruits of righteousness and peace. We must remember the time when John Fox appeared as a teacher of new opinions ; we must remember the dismal outward aspect of Christianity in this land—the wars, tumults, and confusions amongst sects—the loud and angry quarrels of controversialists, their mutual persecutions, recriminations, and accusations—the ferocity of dogmatism,—the fiery disputes about church government,—the avarice and rapacity of sectarian leaders, when power enabled them to be rapacious, and the too great eagerness of all, even the most pious professors of the gospel, to appeal to the sword for the solution of controversy. In this chaotic uproar of sects and schisms, John Fox arose, having attentively considered the evils that then desolated the earth, and the frightful confusion amongst those who called themselves the followers of the Lamb. He perceived

that every thing was fundamentally wrong ; that the precepts of the gospel had but a surface influence on society ; and that now, indeed, the evangelical axe must be laid to the root of the tree. To alter and amend any existing sect, he knew was hopeless ; he gave himself up to the light of the truth in the New Testament, and with extraordinary strength of mind determined to follow that light, divested of all prejudice and preconceived opinion. Hence it will be found, that his system has no reference to any thing existing in his days ; it is not a fabric amended and beautified, but a new creation. Quakerism might, by its friends, be compared to an aerolithe, that descended from the heavens, of materials unlike any thing to be found upon earth ; by its enemies, to the strange and portentous work of a magician ; and it was this resolute determination of following no man's book or creed, of casting behind the back, and trampling under foot, all dogma and tradition, that led John Fox and his followers into some errors, as well as some most valuable truths. Opposition, persecution, personal cruelty, and detestable slanders exasperated the spirits of the early Friends, and gave a tragic tone to their denunciations and a recklessness to their opinions, which could not possibly be sustained when the pressure of persecution was removed. The Quakers of those days were men of a daring, heedless perseverance ; their women caught the contagion of exasperation, and faced their persecution not only with courage and constancy, but sometimes with contempt and defiance. Death by prison and exile, and loss of all worldly goods, by repeated acts of legal robbery, were so common amongst the sect in one period of their history, that every Quaker who had made up his mind to adhere to his creed, might look for it as a probability to pass many years in a dungeon, and to lose all his earthly possessions. In such a state of things, though faith and patience would be

sweetly manifested in multitudes, yet, in some of an ardent or gloomy temperament, the stern features of fanaticism would be sure to make their appearance. And this *was* the case ; violence begat violence, and cruelty engendered provocation. Hence the rugged manners and grim deportment of some of the early Friends,—Hence “ The signs” for the people, and hence the testimonies against “ the hirelings” in “ the steeple-house,” or in the Dissenters’ chapels.

I rank amongst the truths discovered and bequeathed by the Quakers, and on which the church of Christ will soon build much of her strength, and reap some of her fairest laurels—the doctrine of universal peace, exclusive of defensive and offensive war ; the non-resisting opposition to priests, by refusing, in every possible way, to acknowledge the legality of their existence, and the general principle of their church-government, which certainly is the nearest approximation to the primitive order, and the most consonant with evangelical doctrine of any we know of. To this should be added, a perfect level of all ranks and conditions of men within the folds of the church ; the cancelling of titles and of false imaginary superiority by carnal birth, and the reduction of the church upon earth to that state of equality which is required in the presence of the great King.

I have mentioned the passive opposition to priests, as one of the peculiarities of Quakerism, by which is meant the denial of the order of priests, in declining their help in any act of religion, and withholding from them the payment of tithes, oblations, church-rates, or any form of plunder connected with the sacerdotal caste. This “ peculiarity” has laid upon the society of Friends a burthen grievous to be borne ; for to say nothing of those losses of their property by seizures for the clergy, which they suffer to this day, we should remember that severest of all persecutions

which they endured, before their marriages were made legal by act of parliament. Their principles would not allow them to acknowledge the priestly character in the sacerdotal rite of the established church, and yet no other door for a lawful marriage was open to them in this land of clerical dominion. They were, therefore, reduced to the cruel alternative of solemnizing their marriages in their own way, which, according to the tyrannical interpretation of the law, made their children illegitimate and their wives concubines.* Relying, however, on the honour of the sect, and the strength of their principles, they despised the priest and his false prerogative, which could alarm only those who were ill grounded in the truth, and who knew not what it was to suffer for conscience sake; and, with a rare exhibition of Christian courage, they trusted to the Head of the church to protect them in this their struggle for the glory of His name, in that blessed union which he has made holy and indissoluble. And, surely, if we here compare them with the other dissenters, we must confess that the Quakers deserve no small praise; for this "grievance," the greatest that could be well imagined, they bore for a long time, rather than sacrifice the integrity of their principles; whilst the Independents and Baptists are, at this very hour, fretting and chafing under the same temptation, to which they uniformly succumb! Much have we heard of late of the dissenters' grievances; and the article of marriage is the most prominent on the list, for the remedy of which all sorts of delusive recipes have been proposed; but, nevertheless, not one instance—no, not one—has ever been recorded of

* Some scoundrel of a Judge, whose name I forget, said from the bench, in a question connected with Quaker marriages, "the Quakers come together like brute beasts."

a Baptist or Independent venturing on matrimony, without bowing the knee to a priest of the dominant sect. I leave others to draw their conclusions on this phenomenon; the facts cannot be disputed.

They that moulded the sect of Quakers did, however, commit one capital error in the rules of their church government,—for all that comes forth from the hands of man is imperfect,—and by that error or oversight, allowed the inroad of an evil which seems incurable, without a revolution. In a society of such high spiritual pretensions, to allow every child of a Quaker to become, by mere hereditary right, a member of the society, and to permit the carnal birth of those born merely “by the will of man, and the will of the flesh,” to enjoy an equal share of all Christian privileges with those who are born in the spirit; was to join things human and divine together in melancholy disorder; and after having purged away all the dregs of men’s inventions, to retain the worst arrangements of the church of Rome and the church of England, or even of the heathen Brahmins!

The effect of this law or custom has been twofold; to introduce a majority of mere moralists, totally unacquainted with the life and power of the gospel, and gradually to infuse a tone of thinking unlike that which influenced the society in its first era. Hereditary membership in a Christian sect is sure, sooner or later, to create a generation that forgets, and at last denies, the creed of its origin. The Quakers of the nineteenth century adopted the opinions of *human nature*; they were, with the exception of the spiritual minority, a *tabula rasa*, as to spiritual matters, and though they adhered to all the external peculiarities of their sect, they were in a state to receive a new order of religious impressions. In this crisis, Joseph John Gurney, of Norwich, arose amongst them, a deservedly popular

preacher and religious author. His writings have had a vast influence on the society; and although there is in them a slight conventional tinge of the old Quakerism, yet it is so modified and subdued as to be little more than a pleasing exposition of devout Arminian theology. It would, nevertheless, be a great mistake, or a gross calumny, to assert, that piety has prevailed only amongst those who may be ranked in "the new school." Long before the birth of Mr. Gurney, there were amongst the Quakers many spiritual and humble Christians,—many who went out of this world clad in the marriage garment, and many ministers whose preaching was blessed in the conversion of souls.

The present tendency of the Quakers is decidedly to what we call evangelical doctrine, or, rather, to lay aside the hieroglyphs of mysticism;—a fact well known by all who have taken the trouble to examine the operations of their society. With the evidences of such a tendency, visible to lookers on, but more markedly to those who are members of their community, it is matter of surprise, that within the last three or four years some Quakers should have entertained a retrospective fear of their ancient opinions, as if the incursion of some most pernicious heresy were at hand. Perhaps this alarm has been excited by the too successful efforts of Elias Hicks, who, in America, congregated round the standard of ultra-mysticism, a very large secession from the body of transatlantic Friends. Isaac Crewsdon, of Liverpool, published, not long ago, a book entitled "the Beacon;" in which he placed the errors of Elias Hicks in a very prominent light, with scripture confutations appended to them; and it seems evident, that the intended effect of this book was to point out the probable tendency of Quaker doctrine. The publication of "the Beacon" produced

answers, replies, and rejoinders. New writers have discovered new errors, and it has been confidently asserted, in the course of this controversy, that the metaphysical theologues of the Brahminical school, the later Platonicians, the disciples of Jacob Behmen, Madame Guion, and the Quakers, have all one and the same religion, and that Elias Hicks may be safely followed as the great teacher of them all.

Some respected Quakers, men of supposed piety, have, in consequence of this controversy, left the society, and, by a most wonderful act of courage, leapt headlong into the undrained bog of the Established Church, sinking over head and ears into all the depths of Archbishops and Bishops, tithes and pluralities, simony and semi-popery; giving their unfeigned assent and consent to the prayer-book, and, without any visible qualms of conscience, sitting down as docile disciples at the feet of the clergy, according to the faith prescribed by act of parliament; of such a monstrous transition we can only say, that it is as if a butterfly were to reverse the order of nature, and change itself into a grub; or compare it to one, who, being angry that he was supplied with rain instead of hard water, should, in a pet, betake himself to the town-sewer for his beverage! It will, however, generally be found that a seceding dissenter can admire that which churchmen secretly despise. *Corruptio optimi pessima*.

There are some who anticipate, because they desire, a dissolution of the society of Quakers, by the workings of this controversy; but I think they are grievously mistaken in their calculations, and that the probable effect of it will be, a purgation of some of its dross, by a secession of all those whose inclinations prompt them to seek a discipline less at variance with the habits and customs of the world. The rule and doctrine of

the Quakers are certainly not *perfect*; but it would be difficult to prove that any other sect has approached nearer to perfection; and though there are in other sects to be found some good things which are wanting amongst the Quakers, yet, on the other hand, they are in possession of valuable truths which have no practical power amongst other denominations.

In casting up the grand account, and looking at the general result, it may safely be asserted, that no Christian community has a discipline better adapted to enforce the practices of integrity, justice, and general morality amongst its members, and that the internal laws of this peculiar republic seemed based on this excellent axiom, "that those know God who keep his commandments." If we may recognise a good tree by its fruits, we may safely say, that some of the branches of the true vine are to be found amongst the Friends, and that these are indeed well ingrafted on it, because they bring forth much fruit. Whither should I turn, in all the world, for examples of active benevolence, munificent charity, and self-denying philanthropy, with greater confidence, than to some of the spiritual Quakers? and where should I seek, with greater alacrity, for an answer to a deriding sceptic, when he desired me to shew him a real disciple of Jesus of Nazareth?

To conclude: he that to the unadulterated doctrine of the reformers should add much of the church government, and some of the peculiar principles of the Quakers, and on such an amalgamation should found a new sect, would, I believe, in the event, be acknowledged a public benefactor of the Christian body; for we have hitherto been trying experiments on the truth, and like empirics have been mixing up some things, known to be good, with others that we conjecture to be so, trusting to superstition or to chance to effect a remedy which all confess is wanted; but now is the time to leave off practising with old prejudices and

idols of the tribe,—now is the time to mount the eminence, which is far above the din and darkness of sectarian lawgivers, and, according to the pattern given in the mount, to build a holy tabernacle to the Lord, out of those materials which experience has proved to be good, and which are to be found in the gospel, leaving all the rest to the workmen of Babel, and “the rulers of the darkness of this world.”

LETTER XXIV.

CONGREGATIONAL Dissenters are in the habit of urging the question of church reform against the establishment, as if they themselves were in possession of a perfect form of church government, exactly on the model bequeathed in the New Testament. This is, however, a delusion, for the Congregational churches have made no greater progress to perfection than consists in rejecting some things positively bad and of Popish origin: they are far from that state which might justify them in referring to their own system as an example for others. The deficiency in the Congregational churches is, indeed, serious; it is no less than a total change of the ministerial office, by consigning that to one person which ought to be the prerogative or duty of many—a change which has produced a state of things as different as possible from the primitive order. The Congregationalists have not, by any new invention emanating from themselves, introduced this change; they have inherited it; they have it from the church of England which received it, as a very profitable legacy, from the church of Rome. It is the work of the old apostacy, not of the Dissenters.

The following evidence of my assertion must be unexceptionable, and I shall leave it, to convince by its own weight. “I shall never oppose this order,” says Dr. Owen, “but rather desire to see it in practice; namely, that particular churches were of such an

extent as necessarily to require *many elders*, both teaching and ruling, for their instruction and government; and that, among these elders, one should be chosen by themselves, with the consent of the church, not into a new order, not into a degree of authority above his brethren, but only into his part of the common work in a peculiar manner which requires some presidency. Hereby no new officer, no new order of officers, no new degree of authority or power is constituted in the church, only the work and duty of it cast into such an order, as the very light of nature doth require." And again, "the nature of the work whereunto they are called, requires, that, in every church, consisting of any considerable number of members, *there should be more elders than one*: for the elders are to take care of the walk or conversation of all the members of the church, that it be according unto the rule of the gospel." "It is difficult, *if not impossible*, on the supposition of one elder only in a church, to preserve the rule of the church from being prelati- cal or popular. There is nothing more frequently objected unto those who dissent from diocesan Bishops, than that they would every one be Bishops in their own parishes; and unto their own people all such pretences are excluded on our principles, of the liberty of the people, *of the necessity of many elders in the same church in an equality of power*, and the communion of other churches in association; but practically where there is but one elder, one of the extremes can be hardly avoided."

Innumerable are the testimonies of a like nature that I might adduce from the old writers; but this that follows may suffice, as one worthy of much attention. Calamy, in his list of ejected ministers, says of Mr. Giles Fermin, ejected from Shallford, "that he was a general scholar, eminent for his skill in the oriental tongue, and in the controversies with Papists, Socinians, Arminians; and, in particular, in those between the Epis-

copal party and the Presbyterians and Independents. His judgment was, *that there ought to be more elders or presbyters than one in a church*, which is what he attempts to prove in his book, entitled “The Question between the Conformists and Nonconformists truly stated, by instances in eight churches mentioned in Holy Scriptures, wherein there were diverse elders, viz. Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, and Thessalonica, besides those general texts that speak of many elders, Acts xiv. 23—Titus i. 5.” He thought also, that one of those elders was, in the Apostles’ times, primate or president amongst them, for order’s sake, and this for life; and that from the abuse of this constitution came Prelacy, and, at last, the Pope.”

Taking it for granted, then, that all candid Dissenters,* who have examined the question of church government, must come to this conclusion, that there was in the first age a plurality of ministers in separate churches, the conclusion ought to be, most certainly, that the Congregational churches are themselves in a state to require reform; for if the argument of Scripture has any force against the Episcopalian, it must also be available against the Congregationalist.—“Paul, to all the Saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the bishops (or overseers) and deacons.”—Here, we see, that one church in a town had its bishops; a conclusive proof that “the bishops” could not possibly have been diocesan Prelates; for there were many in one church; and equally a conclusive proof, that there was not one superintendent only, or minister, or overseer, *but many*; and thus equally opposed to the diocesan and dissenting order.

Now these truths, which are pretty generally under-

* Dr. Pye Smith, in his controversy with Professor Lee, has acknowledged the plurality of ministers.

stood amongst dissenting ministers, certainly ought not to slumber; nay, it would be sinful wilfully to pass over a question of such vast importance; for if ever we are to solve the problem of church government, surely it can only be done by bringing forth and employing those truths which we know to exist.

To restore a plurality of ministers to the churches would, however, under existing circumstances, be something more than a reform,—it would be a revolution; for I see not how it could be accomplished without giving up the idea of a paid ministry of learned men, unless, indeed, the churches were suddenly to become ten-fold more munificent than at present we know them to be. But this should be no bar to a restoration of the primitive model; if a faulty system has produced difficulties, it is our duty to face those difficulties. The Church must take up the cross, which she has brought upon herself by wandering out of the right way.

Till, then, the original order of Church government shall be restored, this will stand as an unconfuted truth, THAT THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES ARE NOT YET ACCORDING TO THE PRIMITIVE MODEL.

A due consideration of this subject ought to cool the zeal of some Dissenters, who look on their own system with a sort of idolatry, which acknowledged perfection could hardly justify. They have every reason to be thankful, that they enjoy an order in their churches freed from numerous and glaring evils of the dominant sect, and that, in this order, they may quietly and peaceably worship God without parade or superstition, uncontrolled by the tyranny of Prelates, and uninfluenced by the will of earthly potentates; they may rejoice that, in some slight degree, they are a community of Christian brethren, or that, at any rate, there is amongst them a recognized distinction between the church and the world; but if they sit down in this

system, as in an abiding city—if they look upon it as more than a day's march towards something better—if they begin to think that they must not “go forward,” till they find the old ways—till they possess the truth—then are they in the captivity of that mental error, which if it be not pure superstition, is more like it than any thing else I have noticed in the moral world.

We know enough of the order of the apostolic days to see clearly three facts.—1st. That the churches were congregational or independent in their general arrangement.—2. That there was a plurality of ministers in the churches.—3rd. That there was a conventional union amongst the churches, not expressed, perhaps, in any law, but well understood in the general feelings and propensities of the whole body, which led them, as a matter of course, to consult the church corporate in any emergency, and to abide by their decision. Thus did the church at Antioch; and the decision of “the apostles, elders, and brethren” at Jerusalem, was accepted by the church of Antioch,—and “they rejoiced for the consolation.”

But so high an idea of the present state of isolation is entertained by many, and so greatly is it revered as something perfect, that any approximation to a closer union is looked upon with dread and suspicion, as fraught with all the evils of the most alarming tyranny. To seek the advice and accept the decision of the whole church, in an emergency, would be considered a surrender of individual liberty, to which they would prefer all the evils of abiding contention and dispute. If the divisions in an English Independent Church are not composed internally, there is no alternative but a ruinous explosion; for neither of the contending parties could, by any means, be persuaded to appeal to the whole body and abide by its judgment. What is this, again, but a blind attachment to a sectarian tradition, which “stands on no warranty of the word of God,”

and is plainly contrary to the spirit of Christianity? Why should a church at Bristol, for instance, be more jealous of its privileges than the church of Antioch? or what new views of the Christian character influence us in these days, that we should not look upon the whole body as our brethren, counsellors, and friends? This idea of absolute unalterable segregation of each church was a chimera, engendered by party heat when the pressure of episcopal tyranny drove men into extreme opinions in opposition to their oppressors. The Dissenters had been so long worried by the Bishops, that they were determined, in their own arrangements, to ward off the possibility of any interference, and they thought there was no surer mode of accomplishing this than by never soliciting it. Hence each church stands by itself, and, if it falls, falls by itself. If an Independent Church is in peril, and cannot right itself, it must be lost. The assistance of their numerous brethren would be deemed little better than the help of Cornish wreckers.

The Congregational Union, an experiment of very recent origin, cannot be expected to introduce a better order of things; for it is the fundamental rule and principle of this *quasi*-parliament, that it shall not, in any case, be considered a court of appeal! I do not seek to scare this assembly in its infancy, with left-hand vaticinations; but I may, perhaps, hint my fears, that a parliament thus ushered into the world, without power and prerogative, and even in its weakness, so suspected by some that they keep aloof from it, as a stalking-horse of despotism, will never be able to do much good to the churches, nor give much trouble to ecclesiastical historians in recording its illustrious or even its useful deeds. It seems not improbable, that its chief effect will be to congregate numerous Christians, who dare not trust one another to compose the

differences, and remedy the disorders of their particular communities.

So far from declaring that this assembly shall not be a court of appeal, it ought rather to be determined, that whenever *the majority of a church* desire to appeal to the Union, the appeal shall be heard, and the appellants bound by the decision ; taking good care first that the Congregational Union were a full and free representation of the whole body, unbiased by the preponderance of clerical influence.

This plan is so consonant with plain sense—so precisely the mode adopted in all cases where justice and harmony are sought for in any community, and so agreeable with the principles of union, confederation, and brotherly love, which constitute the glory of christianity, that nothing but tradition of the sect can uphold the present arrangement of separation and disunion.

If the Congregational Union shall be able (as I am sure the majority of its members are willing) to set up the standard manfully against the crime of slavery, cherished by their American brethren, or by any other firm opposition to evil, to display the sinews of a righteous force, we must all hail it with hearty acclamations ; but it is probable that an apprehension of the well-known jealousies of the Dissenting Churches will ever keep it in a state of courtly inactivity, and conciliatory repose.

LETTER XXV.

WE have done now with the varied denominations of Christians ; we bid farewell to the stately sect of authority and the several dissident communities, and our final reflections are on the company of believers in the aggregate—the Church of Christ as distinct from the world.

What shall we say of “the righteous nation that keepeth the truth?” what judgment must we pass on its present appearance? Are the noble promises of prophecy, evolving and fulfilling in the actual history of believers ; and may we now, at last, in the nineteenth century, behold the swelling of that spring-tide which shall fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea? or, has the Gospel come to a stand, and is the ark of the hopes of man still labouring in her difficulties, “tossed with tempests and not comforted?” In seeking to answer this question, we will first turn to that part of the landscape which is brightened with pleasing tints, and remark, that Christians are now in a condition to exert their influence with new and peculiar energies—they have now command over a powerful coadjutor, of whose help, till lately, they made but a poor use. This coadjutor is the press ; which was indeed a discovery, or rather a providential gift, of God to man, a little before the Reformation, that the Beast might receive his deadly wound with a

two-edged sword ; but how long were Protestants in discovering the right use of this engine ! How long were they applying it for purposes of intolerance and persecution, and for waging war amongst themselves in the worst spirit of spiritual dogmatism ! The great auxiliary of the church against the powers of darkness is the word of God ; but the Bible Society is not forty years old, though the Protestant Church has been established for nearly three centuries ; it is only, therefore, within this generation that Christians have availed themselves of this sovereign help. There are those now living who first bethought themselves of this incalculable benefit. The church, before that happy æra, made use of the press for controversy, or at best for publishing theology, for promoting the opinions of men, many of them indeed very valuable, but none of them perfect, and some of them highly injurious.

Now it is no small matter that Christians should have learned not only to use, but also not to abuse this instrument of good or evil, which Providence has placed within their reach ; though there are still to be found two sects, one of which will always apply the tone of a despot to rebels, against all that do not agree with it, and the other will threaten with no less unchristian bitterness as long as it lives in dread of the moths and thieves. But the rest of Christendom has by this time learned that a persecuting spirit is a hideous demon, and that it is as foolish as it is wicked and mischievous to threaten and rail against those whose ideas of religion do not seem to coincide with the orthodox creed, or the supposed orthodox form of church government. The church of Christ is made by her Lord to prosper in a full blaze of light, and in the serene atmosphere of perfect justice. It is impossible that the press can publish too much for her ; let all manner of publications teem forth with exuberant copiousness ; let that dreaded deluge of universal

education and general knowledge burst forth out of the great deep, scaring exceedingly the priests and oligarchs, who flee like birds to their mountains at so strange a sight; the church is rejoiced on beholding the spreading flood, for she has the palladium of truth in her sanctuary, and nothing that can be published or printed by man can either inflict on her any permanent injury, or ultimately fail to increase her power. She does not lean on the elements of darkness for her strength; she has no need of the Forum, the sharp wit of lawyers, the severity of judges, or the inhibitions of statutes, to silence her opponents; her victory is guaranteed in the very constitution of the human mind, which in its weakness must fly to her for strength,—in its inquisitiveness must embrace her revelation,—in its darkness solicit her light, and in its misery and inevitable death embrace her peace and rejoice in her immortality. It is true, that there are, as there always has been, many sceptics; sceptics of science, sceptics of psychology, and sceptics of ignorance or gross depravity, and they will have their talk, and their theories, and their impieties, or their whimsical substitutes for religion, which occasionally deceive and destroy some supposed members of the church, but none of their theories last half a century; another generation comes and they are forgotten, their fallacies laughed at, their false logic detected, their magisterial decrees despised, and all their celebrated labours consigned to hopeless oblivion or perpetual ridicule. But the Gospel “hath foundations;” it is not the handy-work of a theorist, who has joined a score of truths to a score of uncertainties, but of One, who, having the means of an omniscient contemplation of universal principles, and withal foreseeing every contingency, has, in the Gospel, dictated a system correctly calculated to suit the faculties and energies of the human mind, in the path of truth and wisdom.

Whatever, therefore, is true or wise is an element of the church's power. Mankind cannot be too wise for her ; nothing is against her but ignorance and superstition. Ignorance, even in the physical world, has done her injury, because it has been made a prop for superstition ; there is, therefore, no secret of nature that she would not see unravelled ; there is nothing that the human mind can possibly learn that she would forbid to be learned, unless it be some of the hidden things of dishonesty, which it is a shame even to mention.

As, then, this is an age of science and knowledge, and of great labours of the press, the church rejoices and will rejoice ; her desire is to march forth with science *pari passu*, and to shew men how only they can be happy in this life and in that which is to come, whilst others are teaching them to subdue the material world, and in power and wisdom to take a station but a little lower than the angels.

Christians may also rejoice in this generation, because in it the missionary spirit has gone forth victoriously, to bring in the Heathen to the footstool of Jehovah and of his Christ. The Independent, Baptist, Methodist and Episcopalian have, each, with some success, proclaimed salvation to the ends of the earth ; or rather, viewing them as one body, we may say, that the church has thrown down many idols,—not with the fire and sword of the Inquisition, not with the masked idolatry and profound juggling of the Jesuits ; but with the word of truth, and the pure preaching of the Gospel of the grace of God, has ruined the old Dagon and Devils of the Heathen ; has famished the Gods of the earth, and exalted, in a religion of purity and spiritual obedience, Jesus Christ the righteous, the living and eternal High Priest of the Great God.

The church, moreover, is conferring benefits on mankind by cleansing the atmosphere of the social system ;

and by infusing more or less her holy morality into the code of natural ethics, she has somewhat softened the violence of opinion and curbed the tyranny of dogmatism in the tone of the public mind. Flagrant evils, which once used to brave all censure, she has in some sort reproved and repressed ; men in high stations, whether of wealth, rank, or power, dare not indulge in that excess of wickedness in which they once used to expatiate without restraint ; the “ good old times ” of Satan are gone by, and there is an exterior decency in morals and an outward respect to religion which is ultimately of importance ; for though much of it may be sheer hypocrisy and a closer concealment of sin, yet the mere absence of daring and unrestrained wickedness is to the people at large a benefit ; it makes open vice vulgar and disgraceful ; it compresses it into the lowest rank of society, and thus establishes a maxim, generally understood every where, that virtue is honourable and respectable, and frontless depravity scandalous, disreputable, and plebeian.

No one can walk through the streets of London and compare what he there sees and hears, with what he would see and hear in the streets of Benares or Cairo, and not perceive that the Gospel has done much for England ; there is, indeed, a dismal superabundance of wickedness in London, or in any of our large English cities, but still the religion of England is that of the Bible ; it is not an idolatry or an imposture ; vice and sensuality do not constitute a part of public worship ; there are no hidden mysteries of iniquity ; no unclean and beastly Shasters ; no legends of impurity ; no scriptures of profligate Gods and Goddesses ; no cruel code of morals, and no gross and sensual heaven. The frame of society is not polluted by polygamy ; the Bible is such a book that, though it is interpreted variously by various sects, yet it has taught them all a consistent and elevated conception

of the divine character ; it urges precepts which restrain and curb the passions, bridle the appetites, and inhibit " all the works of the flesh ;" in a word, the one great book of our religion teaches us " to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

And lastly, the church is ever increasing her strength with men as with a flock ; the labours of the pious workmen of all the Protestant persuasions are daily adding to the company of the faithful, and reducing stubborn and disobedient aliens into a cordial submission to the grace of the Gospel. We constantly hear that pravity of manners or a cold secularity of character has been transformed, by divine unction, into the comely holiness or self-denying zeal of the true Christian ; we constantly hear that our fellow-creatures have, after a life of penitence and piety, gone forth in the full assurance of faith into an after-state of purity and bliss.

But, then, on the other hand, there is much to regret, much to make us confess that the church is in a state of debility and suspense. She is confronted in battle-array with her enemy the world, which is not strong enough to drive her back into the wilderness, whilst she is quite unable to advance on the enemy.

It is clear that the abundant prophecies of Scripture pourtray the kingdom of Christ as one of conquest and change, and it is impossible to interpret those prophecies into any thing like a sober system of accomplishment, without acknowledging that they indicate a total renovation of society, and that the present habits of mankind must be fundamentally altered to give any semblance of reality to the description of Shiloh's kingdom. Moreover, it might be clear to any one who would take the trouble to examine only the preceptive parts of the Gospel, with a view to their complete and general reception in Christian

countries, that they would, if so received, necessarily put a stop to much that is not only tolerated but even admired now as the strength and glory of England, and of many other civilized countries of Christendom. I feel, indeed, that this is a subject to which I could not do justice in any such limits as remain to me, and, therefore, perhaps, had better not even explain my meaning by any illustration, which, left in its own strength without preceding argument, might appear paradoxical; but I will only remark, as one example, that if we learn in the Gospel that the love of money is the root of all evil, and that covetousness is idolatry, it never can be within the scope of evangelical law, that the present system of extended manufactures and all those strenuous efforts which the nation is making to accumulate money by its busy and multitudinous speculations is admissible or even tolerable. I have read some very able treatises on the philosophy of manufactures, but on their Christian tendency I have seen nothing; nay, in one of the most useful books written upon this interesting subject, and that too by a worthy member of a dissenting church, it is altogether forgotten and entirely omitted, that our cotton manufactures are the fomenting cause of American slavery; that nine-tenths of all cotton imported into this country is slave produce, and that every article of cotton ought to remind us of this horrid and woeful crime. But from external slavery, encouraged by our manufactures, we might turn our eyes to the internal evils of the manufacturing system; to the dense population accumulated in great towns, and occupied in works most incongruous to the human frame; to the sensual habits notoriously engendered amongst the operatives in times of prosperity; to their penury, discontent, and reckless violence in times of adversity. To me a great manufacturing town, even in its sunshine days, is a most lamentable

spectacle. I see, indeed, there, myriads of animals well fed, with abundance and superabundance to eat and drink, but where are the shepherds for this deserted flock? Where is their religion? What process is going on in their minds, to draw them from the gross present to the past or the future? Where are the means, the twentieth part sufficient, for their education or instruction? and what are they but multitudes of rational machines used merely for the acquisition of wealth, and then left to perish as the beasts? * Consider the amusements and relaxations of these poor people; study their habits and inclinations; inquire into the culture of the infant mind, in these thronging hives of Mammon; look at them in their general demeanour, and then candidly say, whether a Christian ought to wish for the continuance of this modern magic for producing gold—the manufactures of England.

But, alas! Christians are themselves too deeply engaged in manufacturing speculations; they are far too closely interested in joint-stock companies, in railroads, in mining adventures, and the other ten thousand inventions for making fortunes, to listen to any warnings, forebodings, or expostulations on this subject. I have heard too much of the rhetoric of

* I know of a great manufacturer who, in forty years' close attention to his business, has amassed an enormous fortune; his workmen, in one establishment alone, are about fourteen hundred in number; they receive the usual wages, which are more than sufficient for all animal wants, but no sort of attention is paid to the moral or religious condition of this army of operatives; there is no school for children—no mental help of any description for the adults. They do their work and receive their wages; for the rest, they are utterly neglected and left to themselves. There is no law of the land violated here; but is not the law of the human family violated, and is not the Father of all the Judge of all also? Money hardens the heart; how many hearts are not hardened by our gigantic manufactures?

cupidity and the plausible sophistry of our money-heaping professors, ever to expect from their lips a confession on this subject, which would require a sequence of heart-searching and self-denying sacrifices ; herein, indeed, appears the deterioration of the Christian family in the present day—their tendency to conform to the world, and their evident aversion to take up the cross of humiliation and self-denial.*

There are wanting preachers for all sects, to proclaim with earnestness, themselves being examples of what they proclaim, that “no one can be a disciple of Jesus Christ unless he take up his cross daily.” Oh ! for a company of Protestant mendicants, some fraternity of evangelical Franciscans, to go forth and lift up the voice against the secular repose and calculating tranquillity of Christians,—to unveil the “creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel,” and with a dauntless eloquence to expose, confute, and denounce those demure sophisms with which “respectable members of churches” defend themselves in their fastnesses of worldly policy. But who will go on this mission, and who will take up this word ?

Certainly the church is now most strangely unlike its first and original pattern ; there were in the days of the Apostles reproach and shame with the Gospel ; poverty, hardships, and difficulties. They had need

* “These men of secular habits and meagre religious belief insensibly surrender, point after point of their first convictions, until they become in all respects like others, except the disadvantage of a profession which serves only to overcloud the hours of reflection and to sully their public conduct. Yet it is such in an age like our own, that *by tens of thousands*, extend the front and give splendour to the array of visible Christianity. May it not be conjectured that, at the present moment, where we shall find one man who is both sober-minded and truly spiritual, we shall meet with three pusillanimous religionists and twenty secular believers?”—*Saturday Evening*, p. 218.

of patience then, for the patience of all was tried to the uttermost ; but now the Gospel is too often an avenue to honour, wealth, ease, and comfort ; the church is a panoply of worldly armour ; she is strong in the elements of secular power ; she is in the high tower, not of faith and endurance, but of carnal security ; and though we might concede that some of this her gala appearance is to be attributed to days of peace, and the friendly protection of a Christian country, yet we must also take into the account the worldly conformities of believers, and the avoiding or evading those labours of opposition which would bring upon them no small share of trials and crosses, if they were indeed to gird up their loins for the contest.

And conformity to the world is to be traced, in various particulars ; for there is generally a disposition observable amongst Christians, to compromise what is most peculiar and obnoxious in their profession,—to court the good will of the stranger,—to stand in a favourable and commanding view with the aliens of Israel's commonwealth—to partake of the *strobula* of their sacrifices, and thus to avoid the shame and uneasiness of a singular and perhaps an antagonist position. But all this, of which only the briefest hints are here offered, will probably not endure much longer ; the time for an external movement is, perhaps, at hand, and the inert elements of a more perfect obedience to the author of our faith, will then be set at work. The means are in the hands of the King of Zion, and “ all the churches shall know that it is he which searches the reins and the hearts.”

But, at present, we have to observe, by a reference to a few obvious facts, that the influence of Christianity, though productive of some external advantages to society, has not produced that fundamental change which can, in the least, enable us to say, that these are the days of righteousness, or that the grain of mus-

tard seed has become the largest of all the trees. Let us, in an hour of calm reflection, consider only the crime and misery prevailing in the metropolis of this country which may well be called the nurse and protectress of the Gospel, and we shall then soon perceive that the old evils of corrupted humanity are still at the very foundation of the social system. Who can recount or even imagine the despair and anguish which daily fill the hearts of thousands in enormous London? Think of the myriads of prostitutes, and the great and varied multitude of visible offenders there congregated; the many whom deceit and treachery have robbed of their worldly possessions; the numerous failures in trade,—the destitution of thousands, who suffer unknown, unseen, and unpitied;—the hearts broken by desertion,—the children left orphans,—the wives rendered desperate by the drunkenness and profligacy of their husbands, — the groans of the prisoners,—the lives of many spent in devising and executing wickedness,—the desperate struggle and scramble of a hungry population to gain a livelihood by any means, honest or dishonest, — the luxury, licentiousness, and selfishness of the rich, — and the five hundred thousand souls who never go to any place of worship at all,—and then declare if Christianity has yet achieved what we are led to expect of it. Does this at all resemble the city, great and fair, the holy Jerusalem? is this the new earth in which dwelleth righteousness? does the desert yet blossom as the rose, and do streams of joy break forth in the wilderness? do the mountains and hills break forth into singing, and do all the trees clap their hands to see a spectacle like this? Alas! alas! shall we not rather call to mind the tears of Him, who, when he beheld the city, wept over it? and shall not *our* tears too flow, as we contemplate this theatre of crime and tribulation? Let others rejoice in the pomp of architecture, and the

increasing munificence of our stupendous Babylon, resounding with the din of her accumulating opulence : we cannot find here a cause of exultation ; we see the curse that comes in the train of all this wealth and grandeur.*

The time will come, when all that we deplore will cease ; but society must first be fundamentally changed. The time will come when all that is highly esteemed “ amongst men ” will become their “ abomination,” and the world, renovated and remodelled, will turn, with aversion, from her present puerilities and delusions. The inequalities of rank, the pride of power, the designs of conquest, the science of war, the insatiety of commerce, the rage of speculation, the splendour and pride of cities, the chains of slavery, and the idols of superstition, will all be discarded and loathed as the bitter dregs of darkness. Patriotism, strange to say, will, some day, be a weakness ; for all the world will be our country, and all mankind our brothers : and the church, the whole body of Christians, will be made instrumental to effect this ; nay, the work will be all theirs—they will go forth conquering and to conquer ; but they must be purged, visited, and refined for the work : there is neither strength, magnanimity, nor devotedness, in the ranks of actual Christians, sufficient for the undertaking ; the refiner of the house of Levi will cast them first into the furnace, to purge away their dross, and take away all their tin ; and then, coming forth from the searching process, as new creatures, they will wrestle to the utterance against all the powers of evil, and not retreat from the strenuous conflict till the all-absorbing kingdom (Dan. ii. 44) be immoveably established.

And then, when the crooked has been made straight,

* The Prince of Peace imparted not these things ; but all is from the store-house of the Tempter, who giveth these things to whomsoever he will.

and the rough places plain, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Having brought these letters to a conclusion, I offer them to your consideration, and to the consideration of other Christians, with a prayer that a blessing may accompany them,—that their faults may be forgiven; and that if they contain any thing right, true, and useful, it may not be uttered in vain.

And in the bonds and love of the Gospel,
I subscribe myself, your sincere friend,

R. M. BEVERLEY.

APPENDIX.

No I.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF LETTER IV.

Luther on the Ministerial Office, addressed to the Bohemians.—“ A fine invention of the Papists truly, that a priest is invested with an indelible character, of which no fault can deprive him ! The priest of the Gospel ought to be chosen, elected by the votes of the people, and then confirmed by the Bishop ; that is to say, the first, the most venerable of the electors, places his hand on him that has been chosen. I should like to know, whether Christ, the first priest of the New Testament, stood in need of all the mummeries of of episcopal ordination ? or whether his apostles and disciples thought these things requisite ? *All Christians are priests, all may teach the word of God, administer baptism, consecrate bread and wine*, for Christ has said, ‘ do ye this in memory of me.’ All of us who are Christians have the power of the keys. Christ said to his apostles, who after him represented humanity entire : ‘ Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed in heaven.’ But to bind and loose is nothing else than to preach and apply the Gospel. To loose is to announce that God has remitted the faults of the sinner ; to bind is to announce that sins are retained. The names which priests

ought to have, are ‘ministers, deacons, superintendents, dispensers.’ If a minister is no longer faithful in his charge, he ought to be deposed. His brethren can excommunicate him, and place another minister in his place. Preaching is the first office in the church. Jesus Christ and Paul preached, but they did not baptize.”

No. II.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF LETTER XX.

Extract from Mr. Abdy’s ‘Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States of North America.’—“Two ministers of the Baptist persuasion, Dr. Cox and Mr. Hoby, have just embarked from this country for Richmond in Virginia, on a spiritual mission to their brethren in the United States. *They have made up their minds to bear reproach and persecution, and death itself, in the performance of what they consider a sacred duty.* They will remonstrate with the teachers of religion, on the neglect of its high duties in their congregations and in themselves; *but they are sustained by those principles which can alone ensure success to human efforts, or afford consolation under their failure.*”—iii. 314.

This most unfortunate prophecy of Mr. Abdy must be more cutting to the Baptist Deputies than any other reproof they have yet met with. On Tuesday, July 19th, of this year, there was a meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society, in the Town-hall of Birmingham; as one of the Baptist Deputies is a minister of that place, the subject of American slavery was intro-

duced by some of the speakers, and pointed allusions were made to their townsman. There was, of course, a reply and a rejoinder, and some things were said which had better have been omitted. There seems to have been a deficiency of courtesy in the proceedings of that meeting, which passed some excellent resolutions, but argued them in an impatient spirit. The Baptist Deputies have undeniably placed themselves in a difficult position; they undertook a cause which they had not the courage, or perhaps the wish, to sustain, and there is no way of extricating themselves from this difficulty but by frankly confessing their error.

No. III.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF LETTER XIX.

American Slavery, &c.—“He (a slave-owner of Kentucky) declared, that he had seen so severe a punishment inflicted, that a surgeon stood by with restoratives to revive repeatedly the fainting sufferer, that the lashes might be renewed. He also declared, that he had known two hundred lashes given at the rate of fifty a day consecutively, for what specific crimes he did not remember. So frightful is the waste of life among those employed in clearing some new lands, I have heard the loss estimated at thirty-three per cent. for the first few years.”—Cox and Hoby, p. 288.

Extract of a Letter from a Clergyman in Virginia to the Session of the Presbyterian Congregations, published in the ‘Richmond Whig,’ 1836.—“If

there be any stray goat of a minister amongst us, tainted with the blood-hound principles of abolitionism, let him be ferreted out, silenced, excommunicated, and *left to the public to dispose of him in other respects.*

“Your affectionate brother in the Lord,

“ROBERT N. ANDERSON.”

In this document it is obvious that the Reverend N. Anderson, “an affectionate brother in the Lord,” wishes those who advocate the abolition of slavery to be murdered by the mob. This view of an American divine, exhibited by himself, is far more biting a satire, than any thing Mrs. Trollope, has ever written in her tours or novels against the clergymen of the United States.

The general Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which met this year at Cincinnati, had a stormy debate about slavery. The meeting consisted of one hundred and forty preachers from New England, a state where slavery is not allowed in practice, but admired in theory. One of the preachers, the Rev. C. Scott, made a stand for abolition doctrines, and proved that John Wesley was a hater of slavery. The reverend divines of Conference became perfectly infuriated, and one of the most zealous “wished to God Brother Scott were in heaven,” apparently not less with a desire of getting rid of his dear brother, than of placing him in an abode where slavery is not known.

By a majority of one hundred and twenty to fourteen, this precious Conference voted the abolition doctrines an “unhallowed flame.”

One of the divines, the Rev. William Winans, of Mississippi, declared, “that Jehovah had permitted and regulated slavery,” and similar impieties were uttered by many. The Scriptural regulation of slavery, the

only one known in the Bible, was the drowning of that great slave-driver king Pharoah in the Red Sea.

No. IV.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF LETTER XIX.

“The driver of the stage-coach pointed out to me several houses, near Richmond, the owners of which were noted for their cruelty, but none more so than a *minister of the Gospel*, whose church was by the side of the road. He added, that there were more instances of harsh treatment towards their slaves *in that* profession than any other.”—Abdy’s Tour, ii. 244.

“Another mode of raising money in America is, where the slaves are “pious ;” would it be believed, that such a qualification should be advertised to enhance the price and secure a ready sale? Yet it is a fact that, at New Orleans, a large number of negroes, who had recently arrived in port, were to be sold by public auction, and the advertisement particularly stated, that there were several *pious slaves* in the lot. Men often make gain out of godliness, but it is no common thing to sell another’s religion, and coin money out of a fellow-creature’s piety.”—Id. 245.

Extract of a Sermon preached by Professor Hough, before the Vermont Colonization Society, and published by their request:—

“No station of honour or authority is accessible

by them (persons of colour); these disabilities are the result of complexion, and till the Ethiopian can change his skin they *admit of no remedy*. Who would employ a black minister at the bed of sickness? Who would entrust to him the maintenance of his rights, and the protection of his interest in a court of justice? or, what congregation would consent to receive him as a herald of salvation, whose lips should announce to them the will of Heaven, and whose hands should break to them the bread of life? Whose feelings would not revolt, not only at seeing an individual of this class seated in a chair of state, presiding at our courts of justice, or occupying the hall of legislation, but even at seeing him elevated *to the lowest and most trivial office* in the community? In all these respects the blacks, if not by the provision of our constitution and laws, at least by public sentiment and feeling, and *by sentiment and feeling, too, which if groundless and reprehensible, admit of no correction*, are a proscribed and hopeless race. But not only are none of the fields of generous enterprise and honourable ambition open to them, they are made to see and feel their debasement in all the every-day intercourse of life. No matter what their characters may be; however amiable and excellent their spirit, and however blameless and exemplary their conduct, they are treated as an inferior and despised portion of the species. No one, *unless himself sunk so low as to be an outcast from those of his own colour*, ever associates with them on terms of equality." — Abdy's Tour, i. 84.

Thus are the duties of man set forth in the light of the Gospel, by the divines of America! can any thing be imagined more scandalous, than that a professor of a Protestant college, in a Protestant republic, should gravely mount the pulpit, thus to set forth the crimes

of his countrymen as if they were virtues? We may judge by this sermon of the ethical ideas of the Colonization Society.

No. V.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF LETTER XIX.

General Jackson a slave-driver. — The animosities excited by contested elections in America have elicited this fact, that General Jackson himself has been, in the strictest sense of the word, a slave-driver; one who himself has driven a gang of his manacled captives along the roads, just as Scotch drovers drive the herds of the north to our southern markets. The first intimation of this extraordinary fact appeared in the “National Journal” of Tennessee, in the year 1828, in a letter signed “A. Erwin,” dated Union Town, Ohio; and in the “Nashville Banner,” the charge was soon repeated. The newspapers then generally took up the subject, and at last Major M’Ilkeny thus stated the case:—“In the year 1811 I was stationed with the troops at Washington cantonment, Mississippi territory. General Jackson spent three or four days amongst us; he was then a militia officer, and during his stay was exceedingly attentive to our drill . . . Mr. Dinsmore related to us the following anecdote of the general, who, he said, *in passing down with a drove of negroes*, halted at the agency to refresh. Being about to proceed, Mr. Dinsmore observed, that it was necessary for persons passing through the Indian nation to show their passports. General Jackson replied, that ‘General Jack-

son required no passport to travel through the Indian nation,' and on the altercation continuing, drew out his pistols, saying '*these are General Jackson's passports.*'"—Abdy's Tour, ii. 154.

Thus the president of the United States of America has not only been a buyer and seller of slaves, but with his own great hand has been a drover of slaves also! President Jefferson was a slave-master, and being moreover a sensualist, who had thrown off all restraint of religion, he was the father of many slaves by his negresses; he sold his children without compunction.

In Washington slavery is very brisk; there is a great hotel, with seventy slave servants attached to it, and there are repositories for slaves, in that metropolis of a free republic! Armfield's repository, or shew prison, for slaves, is much talked of.

No. VI.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF LETTER XIX.

A short time ago a free black came into possession of a pew, in one of the churches in Boston. It was the only thing he could obtain from a man who was unable or unwilling to pay a legal claim he had upon him. He first offered it for sale, but not finding a purchaser, he determined to make use of it himself. The sensation produced by his unexpected appearance among the favoured children of nature, in the very *sanctum sanctorum* of their distinctions, can be described only by those who witnessed it. The next Sunday he took his wife and children with him. (It should be ob-

served, that the coloured people are not admitted to places of worship, except to small pews or boxes set apart expressly for them, and so placed that they can hear without offending the fastidious delicacy of the congregation.) It was now high time that notice should be taken of this contumacious spirit, and the intruder received the two following notes :

“ Mr. Brinsley. Sir,

“ If you have any pew-furniture in pew No. 38, Park-street Meeting-house, you will remove it this afternoon.

GEORGE ODIORNE,
for the Committee.”

With the above was a copy of a note written the day before to this agent of the committee, in these words :

“ Dear Sir,

“ Pew No. 38, in Park-street Church, is let to Mr. Andrew Ellison. Yours, respectfully,

J. BUMSTEAD.”

The other letter was addressed to “ Mr. Frederick Brinsley, coloured man, Elm-street ;” the contents were as follows :

“ Mr. Frederick Brinsley. Sir,

“ The prudential committee of Park-street Church notify you not to occupy any pew on the lower floor of Park-street Meeting-house on any Sabbath, or on any other day during the time of divine worship, after this date, and if you go there with such intent you will hazard the consequences. The pews in the upper gallery are at your service.

GEORGE ODIORNE,
for the Committee.”

Mr. Brinsley on going again found a constable at the pew-door. No further attempt was made to assert the rights of property against such a formidable combination.

No. VII.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF LETTER XIX.

The Rev. R. J. Breckenridge, a delegate sent from the general assembly of the Presbyterian churches of the United States of America, to the Congregational churches of England and Wales, has made his appearance amongst us this year. This gentleman is also a colonizationist; in other words, he is one of the advocates of deportation, or compulsory exile of some millions of his fellow-creatures under the plea of justice and philanthropy. It is somewhat unfortunate for the character of the fraternal union existing between the English and American churches, that whilst the English send out deputies who coquet with slavery, the Americans send us deputies who are flagrant opponents of the abolition of slavery :

Arcades ambo,
Et cantare pares et respondere parati.

Mr. Breckenridge has, in a series of public disputations held at Glasgow with Mr. George Thompson, the celebrated abolitionist, entered at length into the merits of the Colonization Society, compared with the scheme of abolition. Passing over all the usual arguments of his school, I would only notice a strange piece of theological logic in support of

Liberia, extracted from the story of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and their descendants. Mr. Breckenridge's theory is this, that if Japhet conquers Japhet, there is only a conquest but no extirpation; but if Japhet conquers Ham or Shem, then he extirpates, and so *vice versa*; therefore, nothing but Ham or the blacks must colonize Africa. "If they let Shem colonize there," says this profound divine and philanthropist, "the blacks will be extirpated; if they let Japhet colonize, the blacks must be extirpated. Africa must be undone, or she must be colonized with blacks, or all history is one prodigious lie." With this alarming view of matters it is natural to ask, what is to become of Ham cheek by jowl with Japhet, as he now is, in America? "Oh," say the colonizationists, "we must send them off to Africa, for if we do not, we shall extirpate them," and for this reason they all are to be sent to Africa, to keep up the unity of history, and to prevent its telling a prodigious lie!

This tender zeal for Africa; this anxiety for her welfare; this fear that she will be undone unless she is colonized with Ham; this nervous caution to keep Shem, Ham, and Japhet in their proper quarters is indeed touching! Perhaps, if we were to ask this emissary of Japhet, to give an account of the doings of Japhet towards the indigenous inhabitants of North America; the plunderings and violations of treaty; the shocking oppressions and acts of dishonesty perpetrated by his countrymen, and now in the act of perpetration; he would tell us it must be so, because Japhet never conquers Shem or Ham without extirpating them; and that, if it were otherwise, history would tell a prodigious lie!

Slavery seems more thoroughly to embitter the fountain of principle than even the Inquisition.

The State Colonization Society of Kentucky, founded in 1827, thus put forth the statement of its object and design—"to relieve the citizens of that commonwealth from the serious inconveniences resulting from the existence amongst them of a rapidly increasing number of *free persons of colour*, who are not subject to the restraints of slavery." Here Japhet speaks out.

A toast given at a public dinner in Georgia, 1833 :
"Southern liberty and southern slavery! like the Siamese twins, inseparably united, and mutually dependent on, and necessary to the existence of each other."

No. VIII.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF LETTER XXIII.

Extracts from Lord Glenelg's Despatch to Sir Benjamin D'Urban, Dec. 1835.—"The Caffres had to resent, and endeavoured justly, though impotently, to avenge a series of encroachments upon them, which had terminated in the assumption of Great Britain, first of the dominion, and then of the exclusive possession of all the country between the Great Fish River and the Keishkamma. To effect this object,

we commenced by ascribing to the Chieftain Gaika an authority which he did not possess, and then proceeded to punish him and his tribes; because he failed to exercise that imaginary power for our benefit. We forced on our ally a treaty which, according to the usage of the Caffres nation, he had no authority to conclude, and, proceeding on that treaty, we ejected the other Caffre chiefs, who were no parties to it, from their own country. The compact thus made was, on our side, repeatedly infringed. Of the country, of which the dominion was acquired, in order that it might be placed as a barrier between the two nations, and which, with that avowed object, had been especially devoted to be thenceforward a neutral and uncultivated waste, extensive tracts were speedily occupied, partly by British, and partly by Hottentot settlements. The Caffres, imitating our example, endeavoured to resume the possession of some part of their lost country. They were, at times, driven back at the point of the bayonet, and either shot or flogged, if captured to the westward of the Keishkamma. At other times their residence within the frontier was permitted, if not encouraged: but as often as the fluctuating policy of the colonial government led to the disapproval of this indulgence, they were again driven back in large bodies into their remaining lands, with all the rigour of military executions against their persons and property. Harrassed by this long series of aggressions, and the victims of successive changes in the opinions and conduct of the local authorities, *the immediate motives of their invasion in December, 1834, would seem not very difficult to be discovered.*"

"With such facts before me, I cannot refuse to the Caffres the benefit of this second apology for their irruption into the colony. They may, indeed, have been, nor can I doubt that they were accustomed to

harrass the inhabitants with their depredations ; but driven, as they had been, from their ancient and lawful possessions, confined within a comparatively narrow space, where pastorage for their cattle could not be readily found, and *urged to revenge and desperation by the systematic injustice of which they had been the victims*, I am compelled to embrace, however reluctantly, the conclusion, that they *had a perfect right to hazard the experiment*, however hopeless, of extorting by force that redress which they could not expect otherwise to obtain.

“ It is a melancholy and humiliating, but indisputable truth, that the contiguity of the subjects of the nations of Christendom with uncivilized tribes has invariably produced the wretchedness and decay, and not seldom, the utter extermination of the weaker party. This uniform result must be attributed not to any necessary cause, but to the sinister influence of those evil passions which, in such circumstances, find but too much to provoke, and too little to restrain them. Of all the chapters in the history of mankind, this is, perhaps, the most degrading ; nor is there any one great course of events on which every humane mind dwells with such settled aversion and shame, as on that which records the intercourse between the Christian states of Europe, and the heathen nations of America and Africa. I know not that a greater real calamity could befall Great Britain, than that of adding Southern Africa to the list of the regions which have seen their aboriginal inhabitants disappear under the withering influence of European neighbourhood. Thinking, as I do, *that we were the real aggressors*, not, indeed, in the actual warfare, yet, in the series of events by which it was preceded and provoked, I feel, that, if continued for a day or an hour longer than the necessity of self-defence plainly

requires, we shall not be able to rescue ourselves from the reproach, of having exerted our superiority needlessly and unjustly to crush a people, whose impotent resistance leaves room for no feelings but those of compassion."

After perusing the above extracts, it will be worth while to see the private sentiments of Sir Benjamin D'Urban, in a memorandum of his marked "confidential," but published in the parliamentary papers.

Having first pointed out the prostrate and helpless condition of the tribes, conquered in the late war, his Excellency remarks, "thus alone it must be, if, by any human device or agency, that these *savages* (a term by which his Excellency is pleased always to designate the Caffres), are to be, at length, assimilated with the mass of the old colonists; admitting gradually, by *the power of legal coercion judiciously put forth*, combined with that of humane persuasion and example, the habits of civilization and industry, *with the concomitant blessings of religion and morality*; and these, doubtless, are the only probable means of converting a savage and vexatious enemy into peaceable and useful subjects. If this experiment should, after a fair, and firm, and patient trial, fail, it is in vain, for the future, to talk of any other relations with these people THAN THE BAYONET'S POINT; and if such relations, *which, God forbid*, should, at length, *be forced upon us*, we shall have the consolation of feeling that no endeavour, which could be devised, will have been omitted on our part."

His Excellency's anxiety for "religion and morality," and his last remedy of "the bayonet's point," connected with his devout prayer on that subject, will afford a fair specimen of colonial orthodoxy.

The reader, who may have felt an interest in the

fate of the Caffre nation, will be pleased to hear that Government has appointed Captain Stockenstrom, Lieutenant Governor of the eastern division of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, placing under his jurisdiction the four districts of Albany, Somerset, Uitenhage, Graaf Reinet, and the newly acquired territory; about one half of the whole province.

The character of this gentleman affords strong ground of hope to the philanthropists, that Lord Glenelg's wise and righteous policy will not be disregarded in the *eastern* division of the colony.

No. IX.

REFERRING TO LETTER XXIV.

In the twenty-fourth Letter it is intimated, that the Congregational Union might, in the matter of slavery, find ample scope for their Parliamentary enactments. Surely, it is high time not only to expostulate with the American Churches, but to devise some very active and decided measures in behalf of the oppressed 'Apprentices' of our West Indian Colonies. That the emancipating act, devised by Stanley, has only consolidated a bitter slavery, may be evident to the most sceptical, on a perusal of the following tabular picture of 'the Apprenticeship,' in Jamaica, during one year. It is a return of the punishments inflicted by the special magistrates on the Apprentices, from August 1835 to August, 1836, and has been printed by order of the House of Commons.

Total Number of Appren- tices through- out the Province.	Total Number of Punish- ments inflicted under the authority of Special Magis- trates through- out the same.	Total Number of Males Punished.		Total Number of Females punished.	Average Number of Stripes inflicted in Whip- ping.	Max- imum Number of Stripes inflicted in Whip- ping.
		By Whip- ping.	Other- wise than by Whip- ping.			
EACH MONTH.						
249,825	4,293	712	2,646	935	24	50
247,959	5,531	640	2,367	2,524	22	50
258,870	3,073	419	1,344	1,310	24	48
250,237	3,051	364	1,319	1,368	23	50
261,877	2,568	306	1,153	1,109	22	50
255,567	3,122	311	1,451	1,360	21	50
258,977	2,324	207	1,032	1,085	23	48
258,977	3,032	259	1,466	1,307	21	48
258,977	2,630	191	1,274	1,165	22	39
261,087	3,398	236	1,618	1,544	22	40

This document is unanswerable; and it should be remembered, that, not only are female slaves flogged,

contrary to law, but that the colonial tyrants have, contrary to law, bound the children of the slaves apprentices for twenty-one years to come, in spite of our enormous bribe to get rid of slavery in the year 1839. Such are the achievements of the ever-memorable Mr. Secretary Stanley, and such the supineness and inconceivable folly of the Abolitionists!

In West Indian affairs, Lord Glenelg seems to yield, without resistance, to the threats of the bullies with whom he has to contend; he cannot, in this quarter, fight his way unembarrassed with the English aristocracy.

11/12/1839



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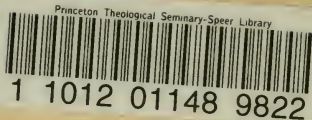
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